To William [illegible]
from his [illegible]

OBSERVATIONS

ON

17340

THE STRENGTH

OF THE PRESENT

GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE,

AND UPON THE

NECESSITY OF RALLYING ROUND IT.

TRANSLATED FROM

THE FRENCH OF BENJAMIN CONSTANT,

BY

JAMES LOSH.

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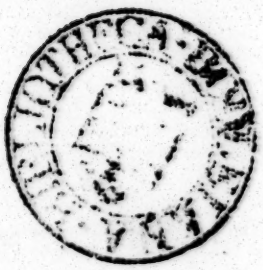

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A CONTINUATION

OF THE

"POLITICAL SURVEY OF THE FUTURE CONDITION OF FRANCE."

TRANSLATED FROM

THE FRENCH OF DUMOURIEZ,

BY

JAMES LOSH.

THE

TRANSLATOR's PREFACE.

BENJAMIN CONSTANT, the author of this work, inherited the title of Baron, and a conſiderable fortune in Germany; preferring, however, a republican form of government to that of his own country, he purchaſed an eſtate and ſettled in France. Thus, at once, giving the ſtrongeſt proof of his attachment to the democratic principles upon which the conſtitution of that country is founded, and ſhewing his full perſuaſion of its being eſtabliſhed beyond all hazard of alteration.

His book was well received, and is ſaid to have made a conſiderable impreſſion upon the people in France. And at this awful criſis, when a diſpaſſionate enquiry into the real ſtrength and reſources of the French Republic is of infinite importance to every Engliſhman, we too may derive ſome benefit from the obſervations of ſo able and enlightened a man. A man poſſeſſed of the beſt means of information, and having every motive to deliver his ſentiments with zeal and integrity.

Three letters addreſſed by LACRETELLE Jeune to CONSTANT, containing obſervations upon ſeveral parts

parts of his work, (firſt publiſhed in Paris, and afterwards republiſhed by PELTIER in London) were ſometime ago mentioned to the Tranſlator as being worth his peruſal. He was not, however, fortunate enough to meet with them, till the following pages were ſent to the preſs, and till it was, conſequently, too late to inſert any of his arguments in the form of notes: he therefore muſt be content with here offering to the reader, ſuch paſſages from the laſt letter as appear to him the moſt important. LACRETELLE, obſerving upon CONSTANT's having ſtated a poſſible caſe in which the Terroriſts might be employed by the government of France, ſays, "CONSTANT muſt, no doubt, have ſhuddered with "horror before he ventured to ſuggeſt this dreadful "reſource. He has, indeed, himſelf pointed out "the danger which muſt reſult to thoſe who ſhould "venture to employ it, and the probability that they "would themſelves become its victims. But then "he throws the whole reſponſibility of all theſe "evils upon thoſe who ſhould have imprudently "irritated the government, and *forced its lines*.

"Imprudent author! where have you learned to "reckon among the energies of a regular govern-"ment, the ſtruggles of fury, madneſs, and deſpair? "In order to demonſtrate the ſtrength of ours, you "deſcribe it as a parricide, at once tearing out its "own and the entrails of its country. May every

"voice

" voice be at once raiſed againſt your horrible ſug-
" geſtion, and may they all unite to defend govern-
" ment againſt its own apologiſt! Its means of de-
" fence are not confined to poiſoned arms: we have
" put other weapons into its hands. Has it not, to
" defend itſelf againſt a few raſh and headſtrong
" men, a conſtitution, laws, tribunals, the joint ex-
" ertion of all good citizens, and our victorious ſol-
" diers? Strong in ſuch reſources as theſe, will it
" ſtoop to form an impious alliance with a few thou-
" ſands of obſcure ruffians, whom none of us can
" look upon without ſhuddering, and whoſe fore-
" heads are ſtamped with the ſeal of murder?——

" You are deceived alſo as to the power of the
" Terroriſts; and nothing can be more unlike, than
" the picture you have drawn of them. You paint
" them, it is true, in odious colours, but ſtill you
" give them a reſemblance to heroes. *They unite*,
" you ſay, *courage and cruelty*; *a love for liberty and*
" *a thirſt for deſpotiſm*; *the pride which elevates, and*
" *the vice which degrades*. Where then is it that
" they have ſhewn this courage? What ſhare have
" they had in our victories? Let them enjoy all the
" honour of their noble September exploits; but
" name them not as partners in thoſe glorious com-
" bats, in which they never dared to ſhew their heads.
" Have not, even, ſuch of them as tardy juſtice, or
" the fury of their own party, brought to the ſcaf-

" fold,

" fold, ſhewn in their laſt moments the very exceſs
" of meanneſs and cowardice? While the feeble
" victims of their barbarity, the innocent young
" woman, or the old man bowed down by misfor-
" tune and years, diſplayed, in the ſame awful trial,
" a dignified compoſure, an heroic calmneſs, which
" vice attempts, but in vain, to imitate."——

" The true ſtrength of our government, however,
" in my opinion, conſiſts in the limits within which
" it is reſtrained; in the diviſion of the legiſlative
" body into two chambers; and in the inſtitution of
" the Council of Antients, the only national aſſembly
" which, by the ſober regularity and profound at-
" tention of its members, forces one to exclaim, as
" one enters it, *Here it is that the law contemplates!*
" It conſiſts too in the perfect independence of the
" judicial power, (the advantages of which have been
" ably pointed out by the wiſe and eloquent Por-
" talis) and above all, in the liberty of the preſs;
" which corrects all its errors by the wholeſome ſe-
" verity of immediate cenſure, which ſupplies it with
" what it ought never to wiſh to be without, a tem-
" perate oppoſition, and which furniſhes it with a
" conſtant antidote to the poiſon of flattery."

N. B. The Author's notes are diſtinguiſhed by letters, the Tranſlator's by numbers.

Bath, Jan. 26th, 1797.

THE

AUTHOR's PREFACE.

THE preſent is perhaps the moſt important criſis ſince the commencement of the Revolution. Order and liberty offer themſelves on one ſide, while anarchy and deſpotiſm preſs upon us on the other. A ſhort time only is left for deliberation; let us haſten then to lay aſide our diſſentions, and all recollection of what is paſt; ſince thoſe diſſentions may ſoon be ſucceeded by uſeleſs regret, and that recollection by bitter remorſe.

In the following pages, I offer to the public ſome ideas which may, I think, be of uſe, to ſhew the neceſſity of ſtrengthening the hands of government; and ſome reflections upon the firſt operations of the new Conſtitution, which hold out a pleaſing proſpect for the future.

Some of my expreſſions concerning men of acknowledged merit, may perhaps ſeem too ſevere; but it ſhould be conſidered that their miſtakes are likely to be miſchievous, in proportion to the purity

of their intentions, and the high eſtimation in which their characters are held.

It becomes theſe, and all other individuals, to ſubmit themſelves quietly to the government, and not to expect that it ſhould be guided by their opinions. By the former line of conduct, they give the beſt proof of their ſincerity and moderation; from the latter, nothing can be expected but weakneſs and perpetual fluctuation.

One of the great evils of party ſpirit is, that it judges of the merit of inſtitutions, from that of thoſe who conduct them; and of public meaſures from thoſe under whoſe direction they are placed; and thus, frequently, itſelf gives riſe to thoſe very faults which were the objects of its premature cenſure.

Another unfortunate defect, which characteriſes almoſt all the men who have borne any conſiderable part in the Revolution, (and particularly after they have failed in their projects) is the deſire of making circumſtances ſubmit to them, inſtead of themſelves yielding to the courſe of events. They conſider the common good as dependent upon their triumph or defeat, and think it can never be forwarded, but by the ſucceſs of their own ſchemes.

I, having no intereſt or connection with any of the parties, and not being even known to the individuals who compoſe them, can have no perſonal motives to miſlead my judgment. I ardently deſire to ſee the

Revolution

Revolution terminated, becauſe its continuance muſt be hoſtile to the cauſe of liberty; and this is alſo one of my reaſons, for wiſhing the Republic to be eſtabliſhed upon a firm baſis; for it appears to me, that on it depends every thing which is great and noble in the future deſtiny of the human race.

It is far from my intention to write againſt any particular form of government, to invite any monarchical ſtate to throw off royalty, or any ariſtocracy to adopt the forms of democracy: but I think it the bounden duty of every friend to humanity, to exhort a nation, which has choſen to ſubmit to its repreſentatives, to remain faithful to the principles of repreſentative government.

Our own experience of the effects of a revolution and the love of order and peace, point out to us the propriety of reſpecting, and of treating with decency, the forms of government of every nation: but all the ſame ſentiments unite, to make us alſo reſpect and pay deference to the republican conſtitution of our own country.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE STRENGTH OF THE

PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THOSE MEN WHO WERE HOSTILE TO THE CONVENTION.

THERE is, in every ſociety, a certain claſs of men, ſcrupulous, diſcontented, and fond of diſputing about trifles, well meaning and poſſeſſed of conſiderable talents, but unforgiving and intolerably vain. Men of this kind are not dangerous, but troubleſome to governments. They do not openly attack, but harraſs, teaze, and moleſt them. As they ſet an equal value upon all their own opinions, they inſiſt, with the ſame warmth and obſtinacy, upon the ſlighteſt grievances, and the moſt important queſtions. The conſequence which they attach to any thing, does not ariſe from the ſubject in queſtion, but from themſelves: an opinion becomes ſacred the moment

moment they undertake its defence; and they conſider the ſafety of the ſtate as wholly depending upon their individual exertions. They therefore conſider perſeverance as a duty, though in purſuit of objects trifling in themſelves, or whoſe importance is gone by; and thus exhauſt their own influence in uſeleſs applications, and wear out the patience of thoſe to whom they apply. By theſe means they either irritate the tempers of men in office, or accuſtom them to diſregard cenſure; and indeed, in the end, generally produce both theſe effects.

Men of this kind, however, have their uſe in old governments, and ſuch as have degenerated from their original purity, by keeping up a ſort of ſalutary anxiety, and preventing abuſe from attaining its height, by diſturbing its enjoyment. Beſides, their ſtrength is here proportionate to the object they have in view; and their powers, feeble as they are, may be ſufficient to moderate the irregular action of principles which have loſt their vigour, and are nearly worn out by the effects of time.

On the other hand, they are not only uſeleſs, but eſſentially dangerous, during revolutions and in new governments. They are as nothing, when oppoſed to the rapid and irreſiſtible movements of nations; or rather, they add to their velocity, by the weak obſtacles which they attempt to throw in their way. That uneaſineſs which they inſpire, uniting itſelf with violent

violent paſſions, (the natural offspring of danger and extraordinary exertions) eaſily degenerates into fury. Their intrigues, which have no effect in diſturbing the ſecurity of a ſettled government, aſſume here the appearance of ſerious plots, from that diſtruſt which men naturally feel towards new eſtabliſhments; and the rulers of riſing ſtates are apt to confound mock ſkirmiſhes with real attacks, foils with ſwords, and thoſe who merely wiſh to dazzle, with thoſe who ſeek to deſtroy.

To bear with patience the obſervations of others, is a leſſon very difficult for men in office to learn; though at the ſame time it is a kind of knowledge extremely neceſſary for them to acquire. But the continual buz of ill-humour, of inſinuations, and of malice, puts an almoſt inſuperable obſtacle in the way of its attainment.

The men of whom I ſpeak are miſled by a kind of reaſoning, which, though it ſeem to be exact, is not ſo when reduced to practice; and this makes them miſapprehend the conſequences of every thing which they do. They are like a man who, having determined, by mathematical obſervations, the diſtance to which the exploſion of a powder magazine would extend its influence, goes, without neceſſity, and merely for the honour of his theory, and ſtands exactly upon the line which he has traced out: the exploſion takes place, he is thrown down and wounded;

though

though he can prove by the cleareſt logical deductions, that he ought not to have been touched. He will act more wiſely if in future he calculate leſs, and keep at a ſafer diſtance. It is of more conſequence for us to prevent the exploſion, than to admire the exactneſs of mathematical calculations.

Theſe men labour under another ſingular misfortune, that of being wholly blind to the changes which are produced in opinions, in intereſts, in things, and in men, by thoſe very events of which they complain. They do not perceive that revolutions deſtroy all the weaker ſhades of opinion, as a torrent levels every thing in its way. They are like old ſoldiers who, having been formerly engaged in a war of poſts in a particular diſtrict, wiſh to renew it, and to occupy their ancient poſitions, though the whole face of the country has been changed by an earthquake.

Though *theſe men* have only played a trifling part, yet they have done a great deal of miſchief, during the later periods of the revolution. They were maſters of all that little fineſſe, playful ſatire, tricks of pleaſantry and humour, and graceful accompliſhments, which were the great engines of ſucceſs under the old government; and with theſe arms they attempted to combat new men, fierce, energetic, who deſpiſed every ſpecies of danger, and whoſe characters had been formed amidſt the awful ſtorms of the revolution.

Often

Often has a ſarcaſtic obſervation prevented the repeal of a bad law; a ſatirical alluſion provoked unjuſt meaſures; or an imprudent obſervation upon the paſt, rendered more implacable than ever men who were juſt beginning to repent of their faults; for the deſpair of the guilty is very different from remorſe.

Theſe men have exhibited, from the firſt of Prairéal[1] to the thirteenth of Vendemiaire,[2] a moſt ſingular ſpectacle, and one which it would have been difficult to have credited, had not we been witneſſes to it ourſelves.

The men who at this period had the direction of public affairs, aſhamed of having ſo long ſubmitted to the moſt deteſtable tyranny, retained their places againſt their inclinations, and as a kind of protection; and ſought, by the ſtrongeſt poſſible declarations, and by every means in their power, to obtain the pardon and indulgence of the nation, which was ſo diſheartened, degraded, and without union or powers of exertion; that, ſix months before, it would have been grateful to deſpotiſm itſelf for ſlavery, provided it had, at the ſame time, freed it from bloodſhed and maſſacre.

What then, at this criſis, was the conduct of *the men deſcribed above*, and who now proclaimed them-

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[1] May 20th. [2] 5th of October.

ſelves,

ſelves, in the name of the nation, the organs of the public opinion? Though weak, they declared themſelves inexorable; without power to puniſh, they refuſed to forgive; and, in the height of their abſurdity, they denied an amneſty (which could alone ſave the country) to thoſe very perſons whom they permitted to rule over them; and whom they thus forced to ſecure, by violence, that impunity which they would have been willing to deſerve by their actions.

They reproached the government with bitterneſs for every falſe ſtep which it made, while they gave it no credit when it acted properly. *They* loudly demanded reparation for every thing they had ſuffered, though they were not inclined to grant any indulgence whatever to others. *They* accuſed the men in office of the ferocity of demons, while they provoked them, as if they ſuppoſed them poſſeſſed of the patience of angels. *They* involved together, without diſtinction, the innocent and the guilty, the weak and the criminal. Neither impriſonment nor proſcription, nor all the various circumſtances which hindered nearly half the Convention from taking even a paſſive part in the tyranny while it exiſted; nor even the zeal with which, ſince its deſtruction, it has rejected from its boſom (ſometimes with more precipitation than regularity) ſuch of its members as were ſuſpected to be concerned in it; could, in the

ſlighteſt degree, diſarm the ſeverity of theſe cenſors. *They* ſeemed to triumph in being able to prove, that out of 750 perſons, to whom they had intruſted their lives and their fortunes, not one honeſt man was to be found. *They*, by their violence, changed ſorrow into fear, remorſe into fury; and then were aſtoniſhed that this fear and this fury ſhould not always produce wiſe and gentle meaſures.[3]

From the firſt of Prairéal,[4] the majority of the Convention, to which one may now do juſtice without ſuſpicion, becauſe it no longer exiſts, (and becauſe, thank God, its immenſe power has deſcended to no one;) this majority, I ſay, of the Convention, inſtructed by long misfortunes, was evidently actuated by the pureſt motives. The ferocious projects of the Terroriſts had ſtruck them with ſuch horror, and the conſciouſneſs of their own miſconduct inclined them ſo much to moderation; that, fortunately, neither ſix months of outrage, nor even a victory itſelf, have made them forget the one, or deviate from the other. The attention which they paid to the

---

[3] Not very different is the conduct of the alarmiſts and other friends of the war, in England. While they heap upon all who differ with them in opinion, in the ſlighteſt degree, every term of abuſe and deteſtation; they are filled with rage and ſurpriſe, if any perſon, in return, dare to blame the preſent adminiſtration, or any of the members who compoſe it.

[4] May the 20th.

rational

rational ſentiments contained in the plan of the Committee of Eleven; the enthuſiaſm with which they applauded thoſe truths, which were every one of them either a direct or indirect reproach to themſelves, and their eagerneſs to limit their own power; leave no doubt upon this ſubject. I am aware that it may be objected, that the attention which I praiſe, and the moderation which I admire, were the tardy fruits of two years of horrors and inexpiable weakneſſes, (to call them by no harſher name.) It may be ſo: but ought we not to encourage a repentance ſo unexpected? Ought not we to take advantage of their acquired wiſdom, and gladly receive from them a ſettled Conſtitution, a thing of which France has ſuch great need? Does it follow, becauſe they have been formerly weak, or even culpable, that we ſhould, when the fate of the empire is in their hands, place them in a ſtate of conſtant heſitation, between their intentions and their vanity, their intereſt and their duty.

By praiſing men, we may often drive them to do their duty; by ſeeming perſuaded that they will perform honourable actions, that very performance may be made to follow. Heaven has given a kind of ſhamefacedneſs to the guilty, which deprives them of the courage to deny virtues which are attributed to them, and which ſerves them inſtead of conſcience. When the wicked are powerful, far from unmaſking them,

them, we ought rather to add to their diſguiſe; by veiling the deformity of their crimes, we often leſſen their bad effects; for men frequently become abandoned, becauſe they think they have no longer any character to ſupport.

I have more than once ſeen generoſity and humanity (in a word, all the virtues which belong to true grandeur, and are borrowed by oſtentation) ſpring up from praiſe beſtowed upon thoſe whoſe hearts were already partly corrupted. They had not courage enough to reſiſt applauſe, and, having accepted it, they conſidered themſelves as engaged to deſerve it.

What then was the object of *theſe leaders of the public opinion*, in undertaking to prove to the Convention that all amendment was to it impoſſible; that there exiſted for it no ſecurity in good; that evil was its intereſt, and in evil alone was its aſylum? What was that ſtrange madneſs which induced *them* to repeat, in a thouſand ways, to the members of the Convention, that, as ſoon as they laid down their power, puniſhment would immediately follow; and at the ſame time to be aſtoniſhed that they did not reſign this power? *They* proved to them, with the moſt fatal clearneſs, that their authority was their only protection, and then imputed to them as a crime the deſire of preſerving this authority!

They dreaded, they ſaid, the re-eſtabliſhment of terror. *They* ought then to have convinced the Convention, that to inſpire terror was its worſt policy; on the contrary, they laboured to ſhew, that it was the only means to preſerve it from deſtruction.

I have often, when I contemplated this wild frenzy, aſked myſelf, if the object of *theſe men* was to ſacrifice the mournful remains of the preſent generation, already decimated by ROBESPIERRE.

Often, when I liſtened to the atrocious addreſſes pronounced at the bar of the ardent and tumultuous Convention, have I aſked myſelf, if the ghoſts of the Decemvirs puſhed on *theſe haranguers*, without their own conſent, thus to irritate the Convention; in order, from the ſhock of ſuch furious paſſions, to glut themſelves with a vengeance worthy of their ~~manes?~~ Manes?

No, it was not for ſuch a deteſtable purpoſe that *theſe fooliſh men* hazarded the ſafety of their country. They were led aſtray by vanity, and a childiſh deſire to be thought of conſequence, by the wretched triumph of pronouncing high-ſounding phraſes in public, which, the very circumſtance of their being allowed to utter them proved to be no longer dangerous.

Such and ſo contemptible are the cauſes which decide the revolutions of empires, and the deſtiny of human

human kind!—If the Convention had not ſeen the weakneſs of *theſe men* more clearly than they did themſelves, if it had thought them as formidable as they flattered themſelves they were; there is no doubt but that the terror which they had provoked with ſuch obſtinate folly, would have once more covered with blood the whole face of this unhappy and worn-out country! And ſurely it is no ſmall merit in this aſſembly, to have advanced ſteadily towards liberty, though ſtrongly urged to purſue the paths of tyranny; to have reſpected thoſe bounds which itſelf had ſet up, though there had been erected upon them batteries for its deſtruction; to have remained firmly and temperately attached to the Conſtitution, in ſpite of all the allurements which were held out to it to aſſume a revolutionary and unbounded power.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE FORCE WHICH PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THOSE deplorable errors, which are yet too near us, not to excite ſtronger feelings than thoſe of mere aſtoniſhment, had their origin principally from

from miſtaking the real ſtrength of government. Sorrow for the paſt was taken for imbecility; and a deſire of making up for former miſtakes, for want of power to puniſh.

This miſtake became general from the time of ROBESPIERRE's fall: and to what dangers has it not expoſed France! One would have imagined that the 13th[5] of Vendemiaire muſt have diſſipated it; but how often, during the laſt ſix years, have we had reaſon to obſerve the little effect which experience has upon the conduct of men? The revolution ſeems to have fixed deeply in men's memories ſuch things as are beyond the reach of cure; and at the ſame time to have ſtruck them with the moſt fatal blindneſs to thoſe which may give riſe to new misfortunes. It is as if, advancing towards futurity with their backs turned, they contemplated nothing but the paſt: reſentment makes the whole of their recollection, and they have all the defects of forgetfulneſs.

It may therefore be uſeful to prove, that the government is ſtrong in itſelf; that there is no chance of attacking it with advantage; that no ſuch favourable opportunity can again occur for that purpoſe as that in Vendemiaire; and that the victory which the Convention then gained, aroſe leſs from the ill conduct of the Sections, (which new parties might

[5] 5th of October.

hope

hope to avoid) than from the real and ſubſtantial ſtrength of the Republic.

The Republic has one primary advantage, which does not ſeem to be ſufficiently attended to, that of being actually eſtabliſhed. A witty woman aſked, when ſpeaking in praiſe of life, "if it were nothing "to exiſt?" This is more peculiarly juſt when applied to Governments.

One half of France, at the leaſt, is at preſent attached to the Republic by its intereſts. And if the diſpoſitions of the Emigrants were more known, and the inevitable conſequences of the ſucceſs of the Royaliſts, and conſequently of the Emigrants, more maturely weighed; we ſhould ſee ſeven-eighths of the other half attach themſelves to the exiſting government, which alone can preſerve them from theſe conſequences. Thus the Republic has in its favour, beſides the circumſtance of being eſtabliſhed, the intereſts of a numerous body of men; and thoſe the moſt ardent and enthuſiaſtic part of a great nation.

Thoſe who wiſh to overturn the Republic are the miſerable dupes of words. They have witneſſed the horrors of the Revolution, and therefore conclude at once, that a counter-revolution muſt be a glorious thing; forgetting that a counter-revolution would be, in fact, nothing but a new revolution.

The motives which attach men to the Republic, are of a nature ſtronger and more powerful than

thoſe which make them wiſh for the ancient government. The partiſans of the latter, at the commencement of the troubles, certainly did not foreſee all the misfortunes which have ſince befallen them, and which have been principally cauſed by their imprudent oppoſition. They defended only a part of their property, their prejudices, and their vanity; and yet we ſee what dreadful evils were produced by this ſtruggle, unequal as it was.

But the men who have united their fate with that of the Republic, have to defend, not merely prejudices, but what they conſider as principles; not merely perſonal intereſts, but that for which they have a religious veneration: inſtead of vanity, I am ready to allow they are actuated by pride; but a ſpecies of pride more profound, more congenial to their nature, and more dear to their hearts; becauſe they conſider it as the mean of reſtoring them to their rights, as the fruits of conqueſt, as an excuſe for their conduct, and as a pledge for their ſafety. They have to defend all their property, and, what is more, their lives alſo:—What then muſt be the ſhock of an overthrow like this?

That ſome men may think liberty itſelf purchaſed too dearly by convulſions, anarchy, and maſſacre, I can eaſily conceive; but I can ſcarcely imagine any one willing to hazard thoſe dreadful evils, for a much leſs faſcinating object, a mere wiſh to change the form

form of an exiſting government. That there is a diſcontented party, I have no doubt; but it is abſurd to conſider all the diſcontented, as determined enemies to the Republic. As well might we ſuppoſe that every man, who perceived a ſlight inconvenience in his houſe, would be diſpoſed to level it with to the ground.

Man is, by nature, more a complaining, than a deſtroying animal. The intereſts of moſt, even of thoſe who complain, are united in ſome way or other (probably without their knowing it) to the exiſting government: at the moment of danger, an inſtinctive attachment to their intereſt would ſhew itſelf; and as ſoon as the ſtruggle commenced, government would draw to its party, not only thoſe who were neuter, but even all the diſcontented, except the revolters themſelves.

This advantage of the government being eſtabliſhed, immenſe as it is at all times, is increaſed by preſent circumſtances.

The bulk of the people become indifferent to a government as it grows old. It therefore aſſumes, as it were, a ſeparate exiſtence; its views and its reſources become diſtinct from thoſe of the nation at large, and are confined to itſelf. Its enemies have theirs alſo; and the whole is a ſtruggle who ſhall be the moſt powerful. The people are ſuſpended between them in careleſs indolence, and even ignorant

of the exiſtence of any conteſt, till the moment it breaks into action. They have no notice of the convulſion, but by the ſhock which it occaſions; and then Government ſees itſelf reduced to the condition of one party, contending with another upon equal terms.

In France, at preſent, things are very differently circumſtanced. Government cannot as yet be conſidered as diſtinct from the people. That inert maſs, which, from its weight, has always a tendency to fall to the bottom, continues to be kept in motion by the revolutionary fermentation. Government knows both that it has enemies, and who they are; and the people are well aware that the object of the plotting party is to overturn the exiſting ſyſtem. No conſpiracy can therefore be in any great degree of forwardneſs before it muſt be made public; and this cannot fail to be of uſe to thoſe, who have the excluſive advantage of being in poſſeſſion of the troops, the treaſury, and the functions of government. The people ſee what it is that government wiſhes to ſupport, but they cannot even gueſs at the ultimate views of the factious, who appear to have no object but deſtruction.

If all governments were in conſtant danger of being attacked, (and that of France muſt be ſo ſituated for a long time to come) and could make the people declare their ſentiments before the attack took place, no inſurrection could ever ſucceed. At

At the time of the affair of the Sections, as there was no ſettled government, thoſe advantages of courſe could not exiſt. They who then directed public affairs acknowledged that their authority was merely proviſional: and their duty was not to ſtrengthen the power they poſſeſſed, but to eſtabliſh a new ſyſtem. Their authority, conſequently, was defective in one of its moſt powerful ſupports, that of offering a reſting-place to the people. In fact, it was a queſtion as to the beſt form of government to be choſen, which the people were called upon to decide; and they could therefore, if they pleaſed, declare againſt their rulers without being conſidered as the enemies of the government. They might look upon themſelves as removing ſo many individuals from office, and not as changing the government; and view the deſigns of the ſections in the light of a mere change of men, and not as a revolution. The diſpute was not about defending or attacking an eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, but as to what was beſt to be adopted for the future. To decide, and not to revolt, to prefer, and not to deſtroy, was what was then the buſineſs of the people.

Let us compare theſe circumſtances with thoſe in which we are at preſent, and you will at once perceive the immenſe diſadvantages under which they labour who think of conſpiring now, compared with the revolters in Vendemiaire, who, notwithſtanding, were defeated in all their projects.

Another important obſervation is, that the diſcontented are divided in opinion, and by no means likely to act in concert: that they have among them one faction, which is a moſt implacable enemy to all the others; and that, at the firſt rumour of an inſurrection, ſuch as were not in the ſecret, though they wiſhed to join the inſurgents, might not have it in their power, from being ignorant which particular faction had revolted. Again; none of the factions would venture at firſt to declare their intentions, from the dread of alienating five or ſix others; and thus it might happen, that the majority of the malecontents would be found in the army of the government, from not being able to determine which was the camp of its enemies, or to diſtinguiſh the ſtandard under which they arranged themſelves.

And there can be little doubt but that theſe men, though ſupporting a ſyſtem they did not approve, would act like the young ſoldiers of the requiſitions, who enter into the ranks with reluctance, but fight like heroes.

A ſecond advantage which this Government has, is that of being reſolved to ſupport itſelf. Moſt Governments are their own deſtroyers; they offer terms, they heſitate, capitulate, and are undone. But that of France is determined to maintain its preſent form. The individuals who compoſe it are attached to their own work by every poſſible intereſt;

and

and though they no doubt prefer gentle and conſtitutional means, yet they will ſhrink from none which danger may make neceſſary.

This may be objected to them as a crime; and abſtract principles may be quoted to prove that it is an immediate conſequence from the acknowledged ſovereignty of the people, that when its will is once clearly expreſſed, Government has no longer a right to defend its own exiſtence. Thoſe very men who praiſe, and praiſe with reaſon, the Governments which oppoſe revolutions, (which are always great evils) wiſh to perſuade that of France to favour its own overthrow; and employ itſelf in nothing, but perpetually collecting the votes for and againſt the Republic.

Among other curious objections to thoſe who govern, I have heard them accuſed of partiality. In order to diſcover in a moment the abſurdity of this reproach, we have only to obſerve, that thoſe who make it, endeavour to confound impartiality with juſtice.

Juſtice is the ſacred duty of all thoſe who govern; but impartiality would be both weak and criminal. Before a man can hope to make any inſtitution ſucceed, it is requiſite that he ſhould himſelf feel a partiality for it. It would be abſurd to become a political doubting philoſopher, and to employ oneſelf in collecting doubts, comparing probabilities, and

eternally

eternally aſking the majority if it perſevered in preferring the preſent form of government. The mind of man is ſo changeable, that the ſyſtems by which he is governed ought to be made as ſtable as poſſible. The majority ought to be ſupported and encouraged, by putting it in mind of its former wiſhes and of its preſent duty; and by making it find happineſs and tranquillity under the protection of the laws. Had there been no other objection to thoſe enemies of the Convention, who wiſhed to take a lead in the new conſtitution, but this boaſted impartiality as to all forms of government, and the conſequent hazard, that by their doubts they might endanger that plan which promiſed to put an end to ſix years of miſery; it would have been ſufficient to cauſe their claims to be rejected, and to decide the but too famous queſtion of the *two-thirds*.

Far be from us, that wavering pilot, who, though toſſed by a ſtormy ſea, and in ſight of the wiſhed-for harbour, would ſtop to conſult his crew as to the propriety of recommencing the voyage. Far from us, that general, who, when his army is in battle array, and the enemy advancing, propoſes a ſecret ballot to determine whether the majority, changed by the arrival of ſome new recruits, would not, inſtead of fighting, wiſh rather to retreat, or lay down their arms.

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The people ſpeaks by actions.—On the 14th of July it declared for liberty, on the 10th of Auguſt for a republic; the 9th of Thermidor,[1] and 4th of Praireal,[2] againſt anarchy: ſuch then are its wiſhes. Away therefore with your doubts, fatigue us no longer with your ſcepticiſm, but aſſiſt us in conſolidating liberty, in making the Republic flouriſh, and in cruſhing anarchy; or elſe ſhut yourſelves up in your ſchools, make them re-echo with your arguments, and, if you pleaſe, devote yourſelves to abſtract ſpeculations; but do not obtrude them upon us, and diſturb our more ſubſtantial employments.

I have often been told that a man might be a good citizen and ſubmit quietly to the laws, though he did not think that a Republic could be permanently eſtabliſhed. I readily allow it: God forbid that I ſhould conſtrue doubt into perverſeneſs. I am far from being a republican inquiſitor, and imputing as a crime, that uncertainty of opinion which many minds cannot help feeling. Government owes its protection equally to all men, and opinions are amenable to no human juriſdiction.[3]

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[1] 27th July. [2] 23d May.

[3] The men who wiſh to be conſidered as peculiarly the friends of government in this country ſeem to be of a contrary opinion. They think that every man who denies the abſolute perfection of our Conſtitution, muſt be a plotter of anarchy and confuſion, and every republican, a plunderer and an aſſaſſin.—Their great leader has even aſſerted, that, in ſome caſes, opinions may be perſecuted with advantage.

But ſurely, however good citizens men of this kind may be, they are by no means fit to reduce to practice that ſyſtem, which they conſider as incapable of being put in execution.

Men's greateſt reſources ariſe from their confidence of ſucceſs, and the enthuſiaſm which promiſes victory generally inſures it. We do not exert ourſelves to improve that which we neither wiſh nor expect to be permanent; and we readily relax in our efforts, when we foreſee that they muſt be uſeleſs. The man who does any thing contrary to his opinion may act conſcientiouſly, but certainly he will not act with zeal; he only is likely to ſucceed, who is perſuaded of the truth and importance of what he has in view.

There is ſtill left to the French Government a third, and that a moſt terrible reſource, which it will never uſe in times of tranquillity, the very name of which muſt make us ſhudder, and concerning which I would have obſerved a profound ſilence, had not I thought that public ſafety required it to be openly ſtated and fully underſtood. The deteſtable character of thoſe who compoſe this reſource, is all that has hitherto been enquired into; what is ſtill more important, its power and its extent, have been wholly neglected.

It is common, in battle, to ſee a thick phalanx of ſoldiers advance with cloſed ranks, ſo that the eye cannot

cannot penetrate beyond the firſt line. They ſeem to have no means of offence but what they carry in their hands, and againſt which the enemy is prepared. When ſuddenly they ſtop, make a rapid movement, and diſplay a train of artillery, which pours death and deſtruction upon the adverſe ranks.

The men, known by the name of Terroriſts, may be conſidered as the artillery of the government; always concealed, but always formidable; and which, whenever they are forced to employ them, will grind all their adverſaries to duſt.

The terroriſts are men, or rather beings, of a new ſpecies, unknown before our time; they ſeem to be a kind of phenomena created by the Revolution, and are at once fickle and fierce; irritable and hard-hearted; cruel, and yet the ſlaves of their paſſions. They unite every thing which has hitherto been conſidered as contradictory; courage and cruelty; the love of liberty, and a thirſt for deſpotiſm; the pride which elevates, and the crimes which degrade, the human mind. One would almoſt ſuppoſe them to be tigers, endowed, by ſome fatal miracle, with a ſufficient portion of human intelligence to enable them to unite together, and to purſue with ſteadineſs, the object they have in view. Thus qualified, they ſeem to iſſue from their dens, to deliver, and to lay waſte the world; to break every yoke and every exiſting law; to make liberty triumph, and at the ſame time

to diſhonour her; and to involve in one common deſtruction, both thoſe who attack, and thoſe who defend her.—Such are theſe blind inſtruments of ruin and death, which oppoſe an inſurmountable obſtacle to the return of royalty.

Though willing enough to deſtroy the government themſelves, they would not permit it to periſh by the hands of others: they are hoſtile to it while it remains free from attacks, becauſe they are hoſtile to every thing which reſtrains their licentiouſneſs, or hinders them from gratifying their horrible thirſt for human blood. Were it in danger, however, from any other quarter, they would at once unite themſelves to it, becauſe they well know that its enemies are ſtill more adverſe to them, than to the friends of the eſtabliſhed conſtitution.

As ſoon as government ſhall feel itſelf in a ſtate of tranquillity, it will make the terroriſts tremble under the weight of its power; for it knows that their triumph would be its ruin; and it is aware alſo that it could not ſupport itſelf by purſuing their ſyſtem—A ſyſtem which has no principle but deſtruction, and which, the inſtant there remains nothing more to deſtroy, or even in the midſt of its wild exceſſes, turns upon its own friends; like certain wild beaſts, which, maddened by rage, tear every thing they meet with in pieces, and conclude by mangling themſelves.

But if the government ſhould find itſelf in danger, if a ferocious party ſhould force its lines, and it ſhould ſee itſelf ready to be ſacrificed by the fury of the royaliſts, (between whom and the partiſans of terror it has taken poſt, with a courage which all men of reflection muſt admire) it would then be obliged to have recourſe to the terroriſts for aid. When driven back into the very dens of theſe wild beaſts, they would of courſe ſally forth in company with the ferocious inhabitants, and fall upon the guilty aggreſſors, to whom alone would be imputable all the calamities of the country, and all the blood which ſhould be ſhed.

With ſuch ſupport, the governing party could not fail of ſucceſs: but who could calculate the conſequences? Who could flatter himſelf that government would be able always to reſtrain its conquering allies?[4] Or who could foreſee to what exceſſes victory might lead? Who reckon up the numberleſs evils which would be cauſed by revenge, contempt, and all the furious paſſions of the mind? The terroriſts, though they then obtained power almoſt without a ſtruggle, though they had no reſentments to

[4] As thoſe monſters, the terroriſts, ſeem to have fully performed the horrible functions to which they were deſtined by Providence, it appears both dangerous and unneceſſary to ſtate even the poſſibility of their being employed by the new government.

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indulge, no injuries to revenge, were formerly guilty of the moſt barbarous atrocity; what then would be their conduct ſhould they now be ſucceſsful? Who could behold ſuch a ſcene of horror with a ſteady eye? There are no terms of deteſtation in language ſufficiently ſtrong to be applied to the men who would hazard even the poſſibility of ſuch an event; their names ought to be claſſed among thoſe which make us ſhudder with horror while we pronounce them.

We ought, however, to haſten to proclaim this cheering truth, that an immenſe majority of the men in power are determined to riſk every thing, in order to oppoſe the return of the reign of terror. It is a pleaſant thing to do juſtice to thoſe whoſe merits the blindneſs of paſſion is apt to neglect.—Since Vendemiaire, when all the monſters were let looſe, I have ſeen men who were abſurdly called terroriſts by one party, becauſe they defended the Republic, and royaliſts by another, becauſe they reſiſted anarchy. I have ſeen theſe men, I ſay, weeping over the conſequences of a victory which was forced upon them, and ſeizing again, by the moſt daring exertions, that middle ſituation from which they had been torn; and though attacked on one ſide by the proſcriptions of the Sections, yet nobly ſetting at defiance, on the other, the threats of the advocates of terror. They deſerve our beſt thanks, for they alone have cruſhed the ſeeds of thoſe horrors,

rors, which were madly provoked by one party, and urged on by the atrocious wiſhes of another.

But who can anſwer for the effects of a new ſtruggle? Who can flatter himſelf that ſuch repeated imprudencies will not be followed, ſome time or other, by the bitter fruit which is natural to them?

Men of every party! Recollect that you have but one common intereſt: ceaſe to weary out, by your follies, the guardian genius of France, which has, ſince the 9th of Thermidor,[5] extricated it from ſo many difficulties; yield to the force of circumſtances, whatever may be your opinions and your habits; and rally round that government, which offers you peace and liberty, and which cannot fall without burying you in its ruins.

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF THE EVILS UNDER WHICH FRANCE AT PRESENT LABOURS.

IF indeed all the ills which France continues to ſuffer, were the neceſſary reſult of the preſent form of government; to demonſtrate its ſtability would be merely to add to our miſery, by deſtroying all hope of ſeeing it terminated. Let us then ſeriouſly

[5] 27th of July.

examine

examine the melancholy proſpect before us, and ſee how much of it is to be fairly attributed to the effects of the Republican form of Government.

The foreign war neceſſarily occaſions an immenſe conſumption of men and treaſure: La Vendeé ſwallows up the population of ſome of our fineſt provinces; commerce is deſtroyed; our navy can ſcarcely be ſaid to exiſt; aſſignats without value deluge the Republic; the want of ſpecie forces the Government to make loans and requiſitions, and to take other meaſures equally hoſtile to the liberty and induſtry of individuals; and the diſcontents which prevail in the country give riſe to vexatious precautions, and to an inquiſitorial police.[6]

I think I ſhall ſcarcely be accuſed of having ſoftened the above afflicting picture; but even though we ſhould allow the preſent evils to be cauſed by the revolution, which has terminated in a Republic; does it follow from thence that they ſhould be attributed to the Republic itſelf? The Republic is the end, the revolution the road which has led to it: it is high time that we ſhould look back upon what

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[6] Since this was written, very important changes have taken place in the ſituation of the French Republic. Its armies have, in a great degree, been ſupported from the territories of its enemies; and its fleets augmented by thoſe of Spain; La Vendee has been entirely ſubdued, and (tho' no doubt the emiſſion of mandats muſt be a ſerious evil) the entire annihilation of aſſignats, has greatly increaſed the quantity of ſpecie in circulation.

we have paſſed over, and reflect well upon the point at which we are arrived.

Would the re-eſtabliſhment of royalty put an end to the misfortunes of France? That is the only queſtion upon this ſubject in which we are at all intereſted.

There are two kinds of royalty, between which men's opinions may be divided. The one is conſidered as a ſpecies of religion, the other as a matter of calculation:—The one has more friends perhaps, but they conſiſt of weak, fluctuating, divided, and ſpeculative men. The partiſans of the other are active, ardent, united, and inſpired by fanaticiſm. The former is, as the reader will perceive, moderate, or conſtitutional, royalty; the latter, abſolute monarchy, or the ancient form of government.

Neither the one nor the other would ſtop the progreſs of the war. It is impoſſible that any perſon ſhould now believe, that the allied powers have for their only, or even their principal, object, the reſtoration of the monarchy:—they themſelves have betrayed their ſecret. The new King, whoever he may be, even had he the ſame power to do it as the Directory, (a thing which cannot be expected in a conſtitutional royalty, and which appears to me very difficult even in an abſolute monarchy) the new King, I ſay, could not obtain a more honourable peace than the Republic. The courage of the allies would naturally be revived by

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the inevitable and diſorganizing conſequences of a new revolution, and by the contempt which they could not help feeling for the fickleneſs of the French people. They would demand ſatisfaction for the paſt, and perhaps even the diſmemberment of France as ſecurity for the future: for as they were not prevented from doing this formerly, by its being directly contrary to their intereſt, much leſs would they then, when that intereſt no longer exiſted.—Nothing but the neceſſity of a peace could have induced thoſe of the allies who have done it already, and nothing but the ſame neceſſity can in future induce others, to give up their pretenſions; and the ſettlement of our government upon a firm baſis, can alone render this neceſſity deciſive and clear. There can therefore be no doubt, but that the reſtoration of Royalty would increaſe the difficulty of obtaining a peace, or at leaſt of obtaining any but one of the moſt diſhonourable kind.

As to Commerce and the Navy, it is very well known, that theſe two ſources of proſperity are only to be recovered by very ſlow degrees. I am at a loſs to gueſs how a King could contribute to revive the one, or re-eſtabliſh the other: miracles may ſometimes be expected from the enthuſiaſm of liberty, but certainly not from royalty; and we cannot ſurely hope, that the fleets of England would quietly yield the ſuperiority to thoſe of the French

monarchy.

monarchy. As to Commerce, the form of government can no way affect it, but as it avoids interfering with it at all: its increaſe depends upon the free and individual exerciſe of induſtry. Can any one be ſo weak as to believe, that the conſtant enemy of the French name would favour the commerce of France, merely becauſe the Throne was reſtored? Or give back to the Monarchy, thoſe colonies which it has taken from the Republic? Or, above all, that Mr. PITT ſhould become diſintereſted, the moment the French become Royaliſts?

Would Credit, the want of which is ſo dreadful a ſcourge, ſpring up of its own accord under a Royalty? Would a conſtitutional King inſpire more confidence than the Directory? Would his power ſeem to be more firmly eſtabliſhed? Would an additional proof of fluctuation make men confide more in the future ſteadineſs of the French nation? Deprived of many old reſources, where would new ones be found? An abſolute Monarch might indeed diſcover ſome of a ſlight and precarious nature, but even they muſt be founded upon the confiſcation of the property of all thoſe who have profited by the revolution, and, perhaps, that of all thoſe who were left untouched by it, and who by that circumſtance have excited the implacable enmity of the old government. Aſſignats would probably be declared of no value, having been iſſued by an unlawful authority, and deriving their

credit from property which ought then to be reſtored to its ancient poſſeſſors. But the abolition of this degraded paper money would not reſtore abundance of ſpecie. The royal Government would be reduced to the ſame meaſures, with which the Republic has been ſo much reproached: forced loans and requiſitions muſt be renewed, in the name of the King, with ſo much the more force, as that government would not have, like the preſent one, any reſponſibility for the paſt. Nor would it attend much to moderation, becauſe it would throw all the blame of its own arbitrary proceedings upon the Republic which preceded it. It is the intereſt of the Directory to leſſen, as much as poſſible, the evils produced by the revolution: on the other hand, it would be for the intereſt of a King to renew them. The one ſeeks, in their preſent conduct, an excuſe for what is paſt; the other would find in the paſt, an excuſe for their preſent actions. It is the object of the one to pardon and to reſtore; of the other, though talking of indulgence, to ſeek every indirect means to puniſh its enemies. The one wiſhes to bury what is paſt in oblivion, and to inſpire hope for the future; the other to arm itſelf with vengeance and terror.

The laſt and moſt important conſideration is, whether either of the two ſpecies of royalty would put an end to domeſtic diſcontent, and unite all the various parties? Con-

Conſtitutional royalty would be oppoſed by all republicans, and alſo by all the enemies of the Republic, except that very ſmall number called Moderate Royaliſts. The preſent pretender to the throne takes care to publiſh his diſdain[a] of every form of government,

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[a] The emigrant magiſtrates have juſt publiſhed a work, entitled, "An Explanation of the Fundamental Principles of the French Monarchy." This work was drawn up by order of the Princes, who, after ſeveral times ſuſpending its publication, at length permitted it to appear. (Page 26 and 29 of the Preface.) This ſuſpenſion itſelf was grounded upon temporary circumſtances. "One may eaſily ſee," it is ſaid, in a letter written in the name of Monſieur the 14th of April 1793, "that Monſieur would have rather choſen to keep this work "ſecret till more favourable times." (Ibid.) This book may then be fairly conſidered as the preſent ſyſtem of Royaliſm in the Court of Monſieur. It breathes the moſt violent hatred againſt every ſpecies of innovation, and announces a determined deſign to re-eſtabliſh, in all its parts, the old regime, which its authors call—the ancient and unchangeable conſtitution. (Page 175.) It conſiders as a mere nullity every thing done by the Conſtituent Aſſembly, "whoſe right" it diſputes, "even to reform abuſes," upon the ground that if this right "be allowed, it would be an acknowledgement that its power was "lawful." (Page 19.) It aſſerts and repeats, "that the King has not "legally loſt any part of his power; that the nobility retain the right "to all their privileges, and the clergy to the poſſeſſion of their pro-"perty. (Ibid.) The Catholic, Apoſtolic, and Roman Church is there "declared to be the religion of the ſtate. (Page 13 of the work itſelf.) "The royal prerogative is defined to be an union of the legiſlative, "judicial, and executive powers, (page 28) the King being the only "ſovereign lord, the ſole legiſlator, and the fullneſs of the ſupreme au-"thority reſiding excluſively in him." That famous maxim, "what "the King wills, that the law alſo wills," is there ſtated and defended. (Page 20.) It is aſſerted, that the King himſelf cannot in any thing "change

government, except the ancient monarchy. His partiſans, the Chouans, the Vendeans, and the Emigrants, would declare mortal war againſt any other King but him. The moderate Royaliſts themſelves are

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" change the ancient conſtitution." (Page 21.) LEWIS XVI. is excuſed for having accepted that of 1791; but this acceptance is looked upon as by no means binding, (page 32) which clearly points out the light in which any engagements entered into by the preſent pretender would be conſidered. Page 42, there is a proteſt againſt " the aliena- " tion of the royal domains, the depriving the monks of their incomes, " and (page 47) the deſtruction of the rights of nobility;" and in ſupport of this they quote St. Auguſtine, d'Hinemar, de Paſquier, de Cujas, and all the laws of the feudal tenure, and of the middle ages. The imperial mandates of the King, (page 55) the right of voting by orders, (page 56) the doctrine that the ſtates-general have no power but that of laying their ſupplications at the feet of the throne; the peculiar privileges of the provinces; in one word, every thing which the revolution has deſtroyed, is there ſolemnly declared to be ſacred.

After having thus explained the principles peculiar to the monarchy of France, the authors go on to explain the general principles of government. They reject toleration, " as tending to plunge men in the " gulph of atheiſm." (Page 91.) They call revolutions, " inſurrec- " tions of a vile populace." (Page 103.) They proclaim " the divine " right of kings:" and they ſay, with Boſſuet, " that obedience, fide- " lity, and reſignation, are the duties which the ſupreme governor of " Empires preſcribes to the people, even when he ſometimes, in his " wrath, gives them wicked princes." (Page 108.)

We ſpare our readers any longer extracts from this work, as well as the invectives which it contains againſt numberleſs individuals. It announces the moſt furious proſcriptions, which it carefully claſſes, and details with a ſpecies of ſavage joy. There is one phraſe particularly remarkable. After drawing a compariſon between this revolution, and the diſturbances in France about the year 1356, the authors add,

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are by no means agreed, as to the perſon they wiſh to place upon the throne; and the new King would be, as to a great majority of the friends of royalty, in exactly the ſame ſituation as the Directory. He would find himſelf obliged, at the ſame time, to reſiſt the foreign foes, the wild adherents of deſpotiſm and theocracy, the friends of the Republic, and his own perſonal enemies.

Abſolute royalty, ſtrange as it may appear, would not at firſt, probably, have ſo many opponents. As it would attach to it at once the whole of one of the extreme parties, the moderate party might per-

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" It is abſolutely neceſſary to kill, like wild beaſts, this banditti, which " ſeditious men have made uſe of as the inſtruments of their fury." (Page 148.) Theſe " ſeditious men" are the founders of the Republic; this " banditti, the mere inſtruments of others," are its brave defenders.——I purſue the inveſtigation no farther.

The productions of men labouring under misfortune, certainly ought in general to be viewed with ſome indulgence, but not when they are intended by their authors to produce the moſt dreadful evils, and themſelves of a nature to give riſe to other miſchiefs equally great, but of an oppoſite kind. The ſanguinary exaggerations of the royaliſt writers naturally cauſe ſimilar exaggerations on the other ſide. They render the very names of government, order, and regular authority, unpopular, by continually uniting them with the principles of royalty, and with menaces of vengeance. They puſh men towards anarchy, by unceaſingly preſenting to them the image of deſpotiſm; and it is much more on this account, than on that of their impotent rage, that they bring upon themſelves, not as individuals, (for in that character they are the objects of pity) but as affecting the public opinion, the diſapprobation of every thinking and every feeling man.

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haps be induced to unite with it, or rather to ſubmit to its commands. A great number of men alſo, tired of public convulſions, might reſign themſelves to the yoke, in the deceitful hope of repoſe. If, however, abſolute royalty had fewer enemies at the firſt, it would not fail ſoon to create a ſufficient number.

It is not ſufficiently known in France, with what jealous care the pure royaliſts, even in their preſent diſtreſs, hunt for grounds of ſuſpicion, diſtinguſh every ſhade of opinion, and reject whatever appears, in the ſlighteſt degree, to deviate from what are called the fundamental principles of monarchy. The partiſans of the old *regime* proteſt, beforehand, againſt every kind of agreement, indulgence, or mitigation. They are, at the ſame time, themſelves broken into twenty different parties, which a profane eye, uninitiated in the myſteries of royaliſm, finds it impoſſible to diſcriminate. And it is the peculiar character of this ſpecies of men, that, while all other ſects endeavour to increaſe and ſtrengthen themſelves, this is conſtantly leſſening its numbers by labouring to add to its purity; and that it exults in the diſcovery of even the ſhadow of a difference of opinion, upon which it may found the proſcription of ſome of its own members.

Were they reſtored, they would carry this ſpirit with them into France, and carefully peruſe the hiſtory

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of the revolution to find grounds for perſecution. They pay no regard to preſcription. Their hatred is ſharpened by age, and their thirſt of vengeance becomes more ungovernable, the longer it is reſtrained.

Beginning with the agents of the Directory, they would aſcend to the members of the Convention; from the members of the Convention to the Jacobins; from them to the Girondiſts; from the Girondiſts to the Feuillants; from the Feuillants to the members of the Legiſlative Aſſembly; from them to thoſe of the Conſtituent; from the members of the Conſtituent Aſſembly to the friends of a limited monarchy; and from them to all thoſe concerned in the events which took place on the 14th of July 1789.[b]

Having

[b] In "Le Rétabliſſement de la Monarchie" may be found an exact claſſification of thoſe whom it would be right to puniſh in the event of a counter-revolution. 1*ſt*. Thoſe who infamouſly conſpired to demand the aſſembling of the ſtates-general. 2*d*. Thoſe who have remained in indolent obſcurity. 3*d*. The friends of novelty 4*th*. Malecontents. 5*th*. Ungrateful men. 6*th*. Philoſophers or atheiſts. 7*th*. Proteſtants. 8*th*. Men devoted to abſtract ſpeculations. 9*th*. The partiſans of two chambers. 10*th*. The Orleans party. 11*th*. That of Neckar. 12*th*. The republicans. 13*th*. All, without exception, who took the oath of the Jeu de Paulme. 14*th*. Les *Monarchiens*. 15*th*. Les *Monarchiſtes*. 16*th*. Feuillants. 17*th*. The miniſterialiſts. 18*th*. The adminiſtrators. 19*th*. The members of the ſocieties and clubs. 20*th*. Such as remain of the firſt legiſlature. 21*ſt*. The ſucceſſors whom it choſe.—After this enumeration, which is ſtrictly that of the author himſelf; and which I have merely ſelected from different

Having thus laid, as it were, their firſt foundations, they would redeſcend into all the ramifications of the various ſyſtems which have ſucceeded, and deſtroyed each other, during the laſt ſix years; and as their vengeance would be political, as well as individual, its victims would find no protection in their numbers. In each village, ſome municipal officers, prieſts who had taken the oath, members of the popular ſocieties, purchaſers of national property, or men who had ſerved as volunteers in the army, would find a perſecutor, whoſe hatred, ingenious in diſtinctions, would ſooner or later deprive them of the diſgraceful privilege of a pretended amneſty.

We ſhould not then have a conſtitution, which would open all the priſons three days after its ratification.[7] We ſhould have a monarchy, which would plunge its victims into perpetual impriſonment. The few ſtrong meaſures of which the republic has been accuſed, and which it committed during the firſt ſtruggle of its eſtabliſhment, would ſoon be forgotten amidſt the crowd of arbitrary acts, to which the royal government would neceſſarily be driven by the deſire of revenge.

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ferent paſſages in his work, he goes on to ſay, that he has "only "ſtated a ſmall part of the leſſer crimes, and treated even that diviſion "of the ſubject with great moderation."

[7] The releaſing all thoſe (with a few exceptions) who were impriſoned from political motives, is one among the various and contradictory charges brought againſt the government of the new Republic.

Read the hiſtory of all amneſties, and you will ſee, that their only effect is to render certain that puniſhment which they retard. Behold the judges of CHARLES the Firſt dragged to the ſcaffold; contemplate the amneſty of 1787 in Holland, to which there were thirteen exceptions, all ſo vague, that intolerance might, without difficulty, comprehend its victims under any one of them; look at JOSEPH II. proteſting before-hand againſt the indulgence which he granted to the Belgians: and, afterwards, give credit, if you can, to thoſe engagements into which men enter, in the ſeaſon of their weakneſs, with a view to regain their former power. There is as much true wiſdom, as apparent pleaſantry, in that expreſſion, which a witty man made uſe of to a government from which he was ſoliciting the liberty of his friend; "pardon him," ſaid he, "notwith-"ſtanding the amneſty." Victory is the only ſafe amneſty for individuals as well as for nations; for ſoldiers as well as for generals; for the moſt obſcure revolutioniſts, as well as for their chiefs.

How blind are thoſe, who, giving up the glory of their paſt lives, and abjuring thoſe principles which alone can form an excuſe for their conduct, hope to diſarm their implacable enemies, by holding up to them their ſuppliant hands, and bowing before them their heads ſtripped of their laurels. They will at firſt be received with kindneſs and encouragement; but

but do they not ſee, that the ſucceſs of the party to which they have become ſlaves, will be the ſignal for their deſtruction; and that they will periſh, as they deſerve to do, the ignoble victims of their own perfidy? The example of their apoſtacy and conſequent puniſhment, proving that their firſt crime can never be expiated, is much more inſtructive, as to the true nature of tyranny, than any ſuffering for real offences, which can affect none but the guilty. The death of an aſſaſſin of the 2d of September, alarms none but the friends of anarchy; that of one of the friends of the Conſtitution, ſtrikes a blow at liberty herſelf. It is particularly to this deſcription of men, that I addreſs myſelf: I know that there are many among them, who, having made ſome advances towards the reſtoration of the rights of the human ſpecies, have ſince attached themſelves to liberty, under whatever form ſhe may appear, and wept over their country when they could no longer ſerve it; and who, though formerly the advocates of a faulty and defective monarchy, yet now, in their modeſt retirement, offer up their vows for the ſafety of the Republic, upon which alone the fate of liberty depends. But if there be others of them, who reject the counſels of experience, whoſe reſtleſs ſpirits know no medium between power and perfidy, and who, as ſoon as they ceaſe to be the chiefs of one party, become the agents of that which is the

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moſt hoſtile to it; let them learn, before it be too late, that they are ruſhing to their own ruin, and are preparing for others a gulph, in which they themſelves muſt be ſwallowed.

When the Sections attacked the Convention, the royaliſt party, out of France, wiſhed ill to their cauſe, from a dread leſt their ſucceſs might give birth to, what they called, a moderate ſyſtem. For three years their moſt ſerious apprehenſion has been, that the conſtitutionaliſts would be ſucceſsful; and their indefatigable writers have publiſhed volume after volume, not againſt the, aſſuredly too numerous, crimes which have ſullied the revolution, but againſt the conſtitutionaliſts alone; and it has been their delight to confound BAILLY with MARAT, and LA FAYETTE with ROBESPIERRE.

Theſe diſpoſitions would be foſtered, and even puſhed farther, by the only internal party with which the royaliſts, in their purity, would deign to unite themſelves. La Vendée would add its fanaticiſm to their intolerance, and ſharpen political, by religious perſecution. We ſhould ſee revived the Chriſtianity[3] of the middle ages, when it had acquired

[3] Our author ſeems here, ſomewhat unfairly, to attribute to Chriſtianity what was evidently the effect of the ignorance and barbarity of the times. That religion has, in all ages, been perverted by ambition and avarice to the moſt pernicious purpoſes, is certainly true; but

quired ſufficient ſtrength to render it no longer afraid of its enemies, and before philoſophy had ſoftened its influence.

Were theſe things to happen, the greateſt lovers of quiet would be obliged to rouſe themſelves, in order to ſhake off the yoke, which preſſed heavily upon their necks: they muſt then unite themſelves to the wreck of the republican party, which they had ſo weakly ſuffered to be cruſhed; and begin, a-new, an unequal and bloody conteſt, in order to arrive at that very ſtate of liberty which they have ſo often ſuffered to paſs by, and which it is even yet in their power to ſecure.

That liberty would, in the end, be triumphant, I have no doubt. At her voice would aſſemble all the thinking part of Europe; all thoſe who groaned under the new deſpotiſm; all thoſe who foreſaw the approach of the thick and diſaſterous darkneſs of the fourth century; and all thoſe who, devoted to freedom, had come to France to ſeek her in the

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but it is equally true, that the ſame unfair advantage has been taken of every other principle, which powerfully affects the human mind. And it is ſurely very unphiloſophical to argue againſt the uſe of any thing from its abuſe. No man who candidly peruſes the Goſpel, can confound its ſpirit, which breathes nothing but "Peace on earth, "and good-will to man," with that which gave birth to the feudal tyranny, the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew, the Cruſades, the infamous treaty of Pilnitz, the Duke of Brunſwick's manifeſto, and the Holy and Catholic war of La Vendée.

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midſt of dangers, but with a determination to defend her ſacred cauſe. Republican Vendées would be formed, not leſs formidable, though leſs ferocious, than the Catholic La Vendée. Truth would be their religion, hiſtory their legend, the great men of antiquity their ſaints, and liberty their other life. Without hoping to riſe again in three days,[c] they would fight and conquer, or periſh free.

I have, perhaps, traced too ſtrongly the picture of ills, which, I truſt, can never be realiſed. But when we force our minds for a moment to contemplate the overthrow of liberty, they turn themſelves almoſt involuntarily to the exertions which would be made in her behalf; and the idea of her danger, even though imaginary, requires to be ſoothed by the reflection that we ſhould be involved in her fate, and either ſhare, or at leaſt not ſurvive, her fall.

A civil war then muſt be the inevitable conſequence of the introduction of any ſpecies of royalty into France. And here I will add one obſervation, which ſeems to have eſcaped the attention of every party, and this is, that the principles of diſcord do not only exiſt between the republicans and pure royaliſts, but even among the pure royaliſts themſelves.

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[c] It is well known that the fanatic Vendeans braved death, from a full perſuaſion that they ſhould riſe again in three days after they were killed.

It will, perhaps, be ſcarcely believed, that democratic notions ſhould have taken deep root in the minds of the emigrants; but exile, danger, and fanaticiſm, have eſtabliſhed a kind of equality among them, which they will not permit to be infringed. And theſe furious enemies of the rights of man are conſtantly claiming, for their own claſs, thoſe very rights which they deny to the whole ſpecies. The feudal ſect itſelf has its levellers; and the love of independence has made aſtoniſhing progreſs in the battalions of monarchy. Never was there a worſe diſciplined army than the one which is aſſembled in the name of obedience. The champions of ariſtocracy contend that there ought to be no excluſive privileges among ariſtocrats, and we have ſeen them violently oppoſe the placing the name of the firſt of the peers of France before thoſe of the moſt obſcure, and that too in a manifeſto in favour of the diſtinction of ranks.

This principle, reſtrained at preſent by a ſenſe of common intereſt, by the preſſure of misfortune, and by the obſcurity of their ſituation, would expand itſelf with the tide of ſucceſs; and we ſhould ſee the blood of Frenchmen, which has flowed ſo gloriouſly for the eſtabliſhment of the equality of twenty-five millions of men, flow diſgracefully to aſcertain that of 200,000 oppreſſors.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER FOURTH.

OF RESENTMENTS AND EVILS WHICH ARE BEYOND THE REACH OF CURE.

THERE are, without doubt, ſome men whom we cannot expect to attach themſelves to the Republic: for inſtance, thoſe who have, during the revolution, loſt all that is moſt dear to them. They cannot be ſaid to live, they are merely ſtrangers in the world, their true home is in the tomb. All that remains is as nothing to them, compared with what they have loſt. But the authors of their misfortunes having been puniſhed, it is their duty no longer to ſeek for vengeance. Retirement, abſtraction, and the expectation of death, are indeed all that remain for thoſe whom incurable ſorrow has bent under its yoke. But their country has, at leaſt, a right to their reſpect, if not to their ſervices.

There is a temper of mind, I will not call it ſtronger than others, (for what is more energetic than intenſe grief?) but which is more powerfully influenced by a paſſion for liberty, and leſs liable to have its principles ſhaken by misfortunes—ſuch ſeems to have been that of the friends of many republicans who were

ſacrificed in every part of France, during the reign of tyranny. They too had tears to ſhed—they too had ſeen their companions in arms, in labour, and in hopes; their guides, their rivals, and their brothers, periſh around them. But they kept their eyes ſteadily fixed upon one common object, which united them with thoſe who were no more—the happineſs and the liberty of their country.

How different are they from thoſe men who are at once malignant and frivolous; without feeling, but revengeful; who have dried up their tears, without having ſoftened their hearts, and forgotten their loſſes, without forgiving their country; who, though amuſed, and even ſatisfied, while in purſuit of pleaſure, renew their grief the moment they have an opportunity to gratify their revenge. Deteſted hypocrites! they prophane the moſt ſacred of all things, tears and ſorrow, and attempt to confound crimes with virtue, in order that they may commit them with impunity. Men like theſe can ſurely expect none of the indulgences which grief has a right to demand. He who but once ſmiles, after the loſs of what he loves, has renounced his right to vengeance; and if he finds his mind capable of amuſement, it becomes his duty to pardon thoſe who have offended him.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF TERROR.

THERE is only one motive which can now hinder all honeſt men from uniting themſelves to government, and that is, the idea, but too generally received, that terror is about to be re-eſtabliſhed. Thoſe who give way to the fear of this, found it either upon what they conſider as revolutionary meaſures, or what they call Jacobinical appointments to public offices. They affirm, that the power of election is taken from the people—that the Directory has uſurped various powers—that men of blood are named to high ſituations, and permitted to iſſue from their dungeons with their former fury, animated by new reſentments.

This is the language held by men who think they revenge themſelves upon the Decemviral Tyranny, by ſcattering diſtruſt of the Conſtitutional Government.

Happily each day affords a new anſwer to theſe exaggerated accuſations. Each day, as the government becomes ſtronger, it becomes more mild alſo: it gradually wreſts a dangerous power from the

hands of thoſe who are juſtly ſuſpected; and acquiring a proper confidence in itſelf, it diſmiſſes thoſe agents whoſe violence for a ſhort time, perhaps, contributed to its ſecurity.

What I am about to obſerve, is not then intended to juſtify that which will ſoon no longer be in exiſtence, but to hinder the remembrance of the paſt from embittering the enjoyment of the future. And I am anxious to have it clearly underſtood, that the principles, which I am now going to lay down, are merely applicable to that criſis which is inſeparable from the firſt eſtabliſhment of a conſtitution: that criſis is with us, fortunately, nearly paſt; and to extend beyond it the application of theſe principles, would be to pervert and abuſe them.

Let us firſt examine the ſituation of affairs when the Directory was appointed. By one of the neceſſary effects of all proviſional governments; the temporary depoſitaries of authority, content to ſupport themſelves from day to day, left every difficulty which embarraſſed them as a legacy to the New Conſtitution. The national treaſury was exhauſted, the reſources of the country uncertain, the fortunes of individuals ruined, the armies without diſcipline, and two of them obliged to retreat, and the enemies of the Convention rather irritated than ſubdued by their want of ſucceſs. Aſſaſſination alſo, having been for a long time treated with a ſhameful

degree

degree of levity, began to be committed upon men who, though criminal, were yet no leſs under the protection of the law; and every thing threatened the eſtabliſhment of a ſyſtem of terror, though by the party oppoſite to that which had before exerciſed it. Woe to that country where crimes are puniſhed by crimes, and where men murder in the name of nature and of juſtice![8]

It was neceſſary to put an immediate ſtop to this political depravity; and that the Directory ſhould ſhew itſelf ſtrong at its very birth, by rejecting the fatal inheritance of contempt, which had been left it by the Convention. Had it ſuffered men to doubt a moment of its character, all would have been undone.

In the mean time, the ſtruggle in Vendemiaire had led many valuable men aſtray. Some were ſtruck with that kind of apathy which is the peculiar malady of honeſt men. While another, and that a numerous, claſs, devoted themſelves to retirement, the ſlaves of what was then called the *public opinion*.

No one can have a juſt idea of the influence and nature of *this opinion*, but thoſe who are well acquainted with it. To form an exact eſtimate of it,

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[8] Had thoſe who threatened to uſe "rigour beyond the law" ſucceeded in reducing their theory into practice, England would probably have afforded numerous examples of this.

one ought to have ſeen it as exhibited in the ſections of Paris, at the bar of the Convention, and in the boſom of the Primary Aſſemblies; demanding, and at the ſame time violating, all the forms of the Conſtitution; always unjuſt from impatience, but alſo conſtantly purſuing with ſincerity what it thought right; never acknowledging its own raſh and tyrannical neglect of principle, but blaming, and at the ſame time perverting, the inſtitutions of others, and treading under its feet thoſe very laws which itſelf had demanded. *This power*, arbitrary and myſterious as it is, has always ſome good end in view, but is perpetually hurried beyond it. The implacable enemy of the legal means which cramp, and of that reaſon which wiſhes to moderate, its exertions; it is the tame inſtrument of whoever flatters it, although with a deſign of leading it to meaſures directly contrary to its own intentions. *It* believes every thing which it orders, to be juſt, as if it were the general will; and always acts with violence, as if it were the will of a faction. *It* complains of oppreſſion, while it threatens as if it were all-powerful. *It* diſdains all regard to prudence, and caſts off its beſt friends, if they attempt to reſtrain its exceſſes. *It* wiſhes its chiefs to precede, inſtead of directing it; and finally, *it* ſeems calculated to impoſe upon that majority, ſtill more ſtrange than itſelf, which is employed in aſcertaining its numbers, inſtead of ſhewing its power;

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whoſe ſole ambition is to be excelled by others, and which prefers the ſecond rank in the conduct of violent meaſures, to that of the firſt, in ſecuring (without danger to itſelf) the triumph of moderation.

It would have been abſurd in government to have employed men under the influence of *this opinion*, (who were themſelves alienated, doubtful, and depreſſed) for the purpoſe of bringing one party back to their duty, of making another act with deciſion, and of animating the ſpirits of a third.

Circumſtances demanded ardent ſpirits, capable of rapid meaſures, whom it might be neceſſary to reſtrain, but certainly not to urge on; upon whoſe intentions the Directory could rely with full ſecurity, and from whom it ſhould have nothing to fear, but that exceſs which it would be its buſineſs to reſtrain.

Amongſt thoſe who united all theſe qualifications, were men who had merited the moſt ſerious reproaches; and they had all been accuſed by ſome party or other.

God forbid! that I ſhould attempt to defend the men whoſe execrable actions witneſs againſt them; there are among them ſome who deſerve to be held in eternal horror. If any thing could embitter the ſentiment one feels when employed in the defence of liberty, it would be the thought that *theſe men* alſo claſs themſelves as her defenders: though not admitted into her ranks, they have ſeized upon a ſtandard,

ſtandard, which, diſgraced as it is, bears ſome reſemblance to hers—in order to complete our enthuſiaſm, we ought to reckon *theſe wretches* among our enemies.

Let us, however, be cautious not to confound with *theſe beings*, ſtruck as they are by an eternal anathema, thoſe who have been merely the objects of childiſh ſcandal, and of the whiſpers of malice. Where is the man who has not been denounced ſince the 14th of July? After having ſeen BAILLY, and PACHE, LA ROCHEFOCAULT and MARAT, CONDORCET and ST. JUST, SIEYES and ROBESPIERRE, expoſed to the ſame abuſe, who can place any confidence in revolutionary reputations? Factions have but one ſtyle; they do not apply invectives to names, but, as hazard directs, names to invectives;[9] they can paſs accuſations, in which they abound, from hand to hand, and one ſingle philippic may ſerve for a hundred parties.

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9 We have a curious inſtance of this in two late publications, both attributed to Mr. BURKE; in the firſt which appeared, there was a long paſſage of brilliant abuſe, applied to REWBELL.—In the ſecond, we find preciſely the ſame paſſage, merely changing the name of REWBELL to that of CARNOT. It is ſomewhat ſingular that no two men can be more different than REWBELL and CARNOT, in education, profeſſion, character, and circumſtances of life.

I think Mr. BURKE ſomewhere accuſes the Abbé SIEYES of having conſtitutions prepared and laid up in his cloſet to ſuit every country.—What ſhall we ſay of his own mode of preparing and applying invective?

Whoever the Directory had appointed to offices, their choice would have been blamed. Without doubt this blame has been but too well deſerved by ſome of its agents; and it is a happy thing that it ſeems at length determined to puniſh them with a degree of ſeverity which does it honour. But not to ſpeak of thoſe appointments which are already rectified, there are others, which, even thoſe who blame them muſt allow to have been extremely uſeful, though certainly juſtly liable to ſome degree of cenſure.

One of the moſt fatal errors of all factions is, their never giving any credit to repentance. They miſtake an individual action for a general rule of conduct; the hot fit of a fever for the uſual ſtate of health; they make a long life chargeable with the miſtakes of a ſingle year; and they perpetuate that which ought to be merely temporary. Frail beings that we are! if we look but into ourſelves, we ſhall find that we totter at every ſtep; by what miſerable abſurdity then is it, that we judge ſo differently of our fellow-creatures? Let us profit of our own want of ſtability, our own deviation from principle, and all the other defects of our feeble nature, ſo far, at leaſt, as not to attribute to any one, a ſeries or a depth of guilt, wholly incompatible with theſe weakneſſes.

There are actions of ſuch an atrocious nature as to raiſe an eternal barrier between us and the criminal,

minal, and even between a criminal and himſelf: but theſe actions are not common, and, at all events, we ſhould never paſs a ſweeping act of condemnation againſt a whole claſs or ſect of men.

It was eaſy indeed to foreſee, what the ſpirit of party ſo obſtinately denied, that circumſtances in themſelves eſſentially different, namely, a conſtitution inſtead of a revolutionary government, and a ſtate of tranquillity inſtead of confuſion and violence, would recal, within the bounds of moderation, ſuch of theſe ardent ſpirits as had been merely deceived.

But, at a moment when the agents of the government are firſt inveſted with great powers, which, though their limits are exactly traced out by the conſtitution, are not yet rendered ſacred by cuſtom; it is advantageous, I will even ſay neceſſary, to the eſtabliſhment of liberty, that theſe agents ſhould be in oppoſition to public opinion. They are, by that means, ſubjected to the watchfulneſs of hatred, whereas, if they acted with the public, they would find it impoſſible to check themſelves from going too far.

We have a terrible example of this in what has paſſed ſince the fall of ROBESPIERRE. Univerſal confidence raiſed men of unqueſtionable probity to the higheſt offices—and yet theſe men ſuffered whole companies of aſſaſſins to be organized. The fact was, that thoſe who were aſſaſſinated were obnox-

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ious to the public; and the magiſtrates, who owed their ſituations to its favour, had not courage to reſiſt it, by defending its enemies; they therefore ſubſtituted public opinion in the place of law, and conſidered themſelves as performing a moral duty by neglecting their duty as judges.

On the other hand, whenever the agents of government are in oppoſition to the ſentiments of the public, they are confined within narrow limits; and ſeek for the means of ſupporting themſelves againſt its influence, in the ſtrict execution of the law. Whereas, if they were ſupported by it, the law would ſoon become impotent. The law is to them like a mound; it is uſeful while it protects them from the fury of the torrent, but muſt ſoon give way and be overthrown, if they add their ſtrength to that of the ſtream.

A ſecond advantage is, that government, which appointed them, conſiders itſelf as reſponſible for their conduct. Certain that they will not indolently remain far within the line of their duty, and that the only danger is leſt they ſhould paſs beyond it; it exerts itſelf wholly in moderating their zeal. It conſtantly directs them, and never yields itſelf to their guidance; and its care is not to urge on, but to reſtrain their exertions.

From this combination of different diſpoſitions, from the confidence of government in the intentions, and its diſtruſt of the actions of its agents; from their

their unpopularity, and from their deep conſciouſneſs that their only ſafeguard is in the ſtrict execution of the laws; reſult, at once, exactneſs and deciſion, moderation and energy.

This has been confirmed by facts. If we except ſome who have already been ſtripped of their power, even the moſt obnoxious agents of the executive government have diſappointed the joint expectations of hatred and fear. The ſame fault has been committed with regard to them, which has, during the whole courſe of the revolution, characteriſed its enemies. They have been irritated on the ſcore of their miſtakes, at the ſame time that their power has been over-rated: as if on purpoſe to entice them to commit crimes, it has been ſtated beforehand, that they may do what they pleaſe with impunity—they have been defied by the very men who affirmed their power to be reſiſtleſs; and treated with contempt by thoſe who aſſured them at the ſame moment of their own entire ſubmiſſion to their will. Notwithſtanding this, if we compare their moſt violent meaſures with thoſe of all the various epochs of the revolution, (particularly when we reflect that theſe meaſures are about to be annulled) we ſhall have great cauſe to bleſs the conſtitution. We may eaſily ſee that if, in ſuch circumſtances, it has been able to offer to the oppreſſed, ſafety, protection, and the reparation of injuries, in more tranquil times it will

produce

produce happineſs, repoſe, and liberty. Woe to him who would take advantage of its forms to overturn it, and who invokes the law for no purpoſe but that of reſtoring tyranny!

Conſider that only five months after the 13th of Vendemiaire, the liberty of the preſs has been ſecured, perhaps even to too great an extent, but after a grave and impartial diſcuſſion; and then accuſe France, if you dare, of being in a ſtate of revolution, or of groaning under any deſpotiſm whatever.

Government, it is true, ſtill continues to exerciſe a ſort of reſtleſs, and perhaps childiſh, authority over the exchange, and the public places; but the experience and the dignity which it muſt acquire from the exerciſe of power, will, no doubt, in a very ſhort time, put an end to trifling errors of this kind. It will loſe thoſe fears which, by magnifying all they look upon, render that formidable, which is in itſelf merely contemptible. It will learn that the great art is to govern with firmneſs, without letting the marks of it too often appear; to have a hand of iron, but ſeldom to uſe it; to employ its powerful weapons againſt formidable enemies, but not to threaten thoſe whoſe feebleneſs renders their efforts at once ridiculous and vain. If one ſenſeleſs faction would ceaſe to clog the progreſs of the Directory, government would no longer be under the neceſſity of oppoſing to it adverſaries as furious as itſelf. All

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honeſt men, who will in good earneſt rally round the republic, will be called upon to ſerve it. They will be the means of aſſuring calmneſs and dignity to an inſtitution, which uſeleſs efforts may ſtill continue to agitate, but can never deſtroy.

Nothing can bring back the reign of terror: but we may thank circumſtances for this, and not *thoſe vain declaimers* who predict its return. *They* are the men who provoke it. *They* abuſe, inſult,[c] and wiſh to terrify or irritate thoſe in office, who happily retain a proper ſenſe, both of their intereſts and their duties. They ſeek to place government in a dilemma, between violent meaſures and a want of regard to its own ſafety; and they pervert, to its diſadvantage, its very acts of juſtice. Is one of the old friends of liberty recalled? They haſten to pub-

[c] I have read with pain in ſome journals, otherwiſe reſpectable, and which ought not to be confounded with thoſe mentioned above, bitter and violent ſallies againſt the government. Let me juſt obſerve to their authors, that ſuch language would not have been allowed under the ancient regime; from whence I conclude, firſt, that they are wrong in deſcribing the preſent government as being neither more free, nor leſs vexatious, than that of the monarchy: and in the ſecond place, that they are ſtill more miſtaken in paying leſs deference to a Republican Government, than to a King. It is not as King, but as the Executive Government, that a King has any claim to our reſpect. And the Directory, charged with adminiſtering the affairs of a great nation, has a right to all that is reaſonable in the reſpect which was formerly paid to royalty. Nothing but what was ſuperſtitious ought to be retrenched, and decency is not ſuperſtition.

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liſh in their lying journals, that he entertains doubts about returning to his country, and that he diſtruſts the ſtability of its new inſtitutions. They ſacrifice even their party to the gratification of their hatred. Scarcely is a miſerable wretch detected, who has been concealing himſelf from the rigorous ſentence of the law, when *theſe men*, as if to deprive him of all poſſibility of being ſaved, eagerly aſſert that his acquittal will prove the lawfulneſs of the inſurrection of Vendemiaire;—thus connecting with his death the honour and even the legality of the government, which, fortunately however, knows how to deſpiſe their provocations. The wretched playthings of blind fury, they reckon as nothing either the repoſe of their country, or the lives of their friends; and, had the Directory been weak, *they* would have forced it to be cruel.

Let our aſtoniſhment ceaſe, and our indignation be doubled, when we learn that there are amongſt *theſe men* many of the creatures of ROBESPIERRE, and that one of their moſt conſpicuous leaders was the panegyriſt of COLLOT D'HERBOIS. We ought never to tire of repeating this terrible truth: we ought to impreſs, by all the means in our power, upon the minds of Frenchmen, that the ferocious inſtruments of the old tyranny endeavour, under the maſk of royaliſm, to provoke that very terror of which they were formerly the ſupporters.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER SIXTH.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE OBJECTIONS, DRAWN FROM EXPERIENCE, AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EXISTENCE OF A REPUBLIC IN A LARGE STATE.

BUT it would be an uſeleſs taſk, to attempt to ſooth, unite, and convince, if it were true, as is repeated to us from a hundred never-ceaſing echoes, that the very exiſtence of the Republic is impoſſible. Every thing which has never been, appears to be ſo at the firſt ſight. Hiſtory offers us no example of a republic containing twenty-five millions of men: it is therefore at once concluded, that a republic of twenty-five millions of men is a mere chimera.

This appears to me to be a ſtrange abuſe of the true meaning of the word experience. Experience cannot ſurely give us any light concerning things it has never exhibited to our view; and that which has not hitherto exiſted, is clearly not within its ſphere. A fact, or an attempt, (which is a ſpecies of fact) is always neceſſary to found its reaſonings upon.—To endeavour to extend them to things unknown, would be to remove them from the baſe upon which alone they are ſupported.

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When we reflect that phyſical revolutions of the earth, political calamities of nations, or the overthrow of ſocieties, have placed an inſuperable barrier between us and every thing which aſcends to an higher antiquity than that of four thouſand years, we muſt be aſtoniſhed at the preſumption of thoſe men who venture to decide that a thing is impoſſible merely becauſe it has never been ſeen; and who try to gloſs over their arrogance, by aſſerting nothing themſelves, but at the ſame time denying the truth of whatever they wiſh to diſcredit.

They will appear ſtrikingly abſurd, if we conſider that the argument which they employ has been uſed theſe hundred, nay two hundred, or even a thouſand years; and thus preceding theories have, in ſucceſſion, pointed out the impoſſibility of every diſcovery of the underſtanding, and of every combination of chance.

Before the formation of large ſocieties, it was, no doubt, affirmed that a numerous ſociety could not poſſibly exiſt, and this aſſertion would be ſupported by experience. The vulgar of every age confidently cite the paſt againſt the future; thoſe who ſucceed them ſee the event contradict their predictions; but while they ridicule the miſtakes of their predeceſſors, they imitate their conduct, and, merely changing the ſubject of their negations, they, with equal induſtry, utter their prophetical proſcriptions.

If royalty, ſuch as we have ſeen it in France, had never exiſted, its impoſſibility would have appeared evident. When we ſeriouſly reflect upon the idea of intruſting to one individual the deſtiny of all, we perceive that it wants nothing but novelty to make it appear abſurd.

If this kind of royalty had never exiſted but in ſmall ſtates, we ſhould have found out an hundred ſpecious arguments againſt the poſſibility of conſtituting a nation of twenty-five millions of men into a monarchy.

In a ſmall ſtate, it might be ſaid, it is leſs dangerous to inveſt a ſingle man with the ſupreme power, becauſe he may there be conſidered as under the immediate obſervation of all his ſubjects. His natural feelings of humanity muſt be acted upon by the ſight of the perſon he puniſhes; and it is impoſſible that he ſhould be impoſed upon. If he be cruel, it muſt be for the ſake of cruelty; if an oppreſſor, it muſt be from a love of tyranny. In a great empire, on the other hand, he might either be cruel or an oppreſſor from mere weakneſs: he might be perſuaded, by the flattery of ſurrounding ſycophants, that he was beneficent and juſt, and even imagine himſelf giving proofs of virtues which he did not poſſeſs.

In a ſmall ſtate, the functions of the Prince being confined within the bounds of his limited poſſeſſions, do not make it neceſſary to delegate his powers:

powers: in an extenſive country, his authority grows corrupt, as it becomes more diſtant from its ſource. One may ſay of injuſtice as VIRGIL ſays of fame, *vires acquirit eundo.*

The peculiar excellence of a monarchy is, that every thing in it is under the guidance of one man, and conſequently directed by one ſimple plan; but this advantage cannot exiſt in a large monarchy. It muſt unite all the inconveniencies of a republic, which ariſe from the number of the agents it is obliged to employ, to thoſe evils of a deſpotiſm, which reſult from its arbitrary power.

In a ſmall ſtate, the prince cannot pay a numerous army; his military force cannot therefore become the inſtrument of oppreſſion: for it is not the proportional, but the poſitive, number of ſoldiers, which makes them dangerous. An hundred of them could not overcome ten thouſand men, but a hundred thouſand might enſlave many millions. The chief of an extenſive monarchy, obliged to keep on foot ſuch an army as this, would be, at once, its ſlave, and the tyrant of others. He would not be able to reſiſt the inſtruments of his own power. And thus a vaſt monarchy muſt neceſſarily introduce a military deſpotiſm.

Again; the opinion of his neighbours reſtrains the ſovereign of a ſmall country: he can by no means avoid being ſurrounded by them; and he can neither

eſcape their obſervations, defy, nor forget them.—But this check loſes all its force, when applied to the monarch of an extenſive empire; public opinion may waſte itſelf upon the frontiers of his dominions, but it will never reach him in the receſſes of his diſtant palace.

I ſhould be afraid of wearying out the patience of the reader, were I to detail, more at length, all that may be urged in favour of this ill-founded idea; and I have ſaid enough to ſhew how apt reaſonings of this kind are to lead us into error. It is abſurd to argue againſt the abſolute impoſſibility of any form of government. Let us then no longer reſemble thoſe infant nations, which, in their maps, ſtate every thing beyond the countries with which they are acquainted, (and they are ignorant of all but their own) to be ſandy waſtes and uninhabitable deſerts.

It is with governments, as with the human body. If we conſidered it abſtractedly, we ſhould conclude that it could not for one ſingle day reſiſt the ſhocks to which it is expoſed. A certain celebrated anatomiſt was afraid of even the ſlighteſt motion; "for there is none," ſaid he, "which, when we "reflect upon the fragility of our frames, does not "put our life in danger."

Governments, however, continue to exiſt in ſpite of theories, becauſe, in every nation, repoſe is the eſſential,

eſſential, and almoſt excluſive, wiſh of the maſs of the people: it yields eaſily to every thing which is tolerable; and by this very pliancy, renders that tolerable which was not ſo at firſt.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

OF THE ADVANTAGES OF A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT.

IF, however, we ſhould conclude, from the circumſtance of every government being poſſible in practice, that all the forms of government are in themſelves indifferent; we ſhould fall into a groſs error. My object hitherto has been to prove, that, every thing elſe being equal, a republic ought to have the preference in France, from the mere circumſtance of its being eſtabliſhed. Had I wiſhed to demonſtrate its abſtract pre-eminence, I ſhould have adduced a thouſand arguments, which I have not even hinted at.

I would have thrown my eyes over the map of hiſtory, where we find monarchies diſtinguiſhed from republics by their faded and uniform colouring. They condemn a great portion of our faculties and our hopes to inactivity; and, though repoſe be a good,

good, yet inactivity is an evil. Men wish to be free from agitation, but they do not wish to be paralysed: and if monarchy, by its very nature, throw useless clogs in the way of activity, that alone (whatever those may say who speculate upon the sleep of the human race) forms an important objection to monarchy.

I would have observed, that this inactivity is the source of one of the most fatal evils to which our nature is subject, of an evil which is not only political but also individual—I mean that wretched and consuming sensation, which preys upon our very existence, which discolours every object, and which, like the burning winds of Africa, dries up and blights all things which fall in its way. This sensation (for which there is no name, either in the ancient languages, or in that of the only country in Europe which was free before the French became so) arises principally from the privation of every object, interest, and hope, but such as are narrow and personal. It pursues not only the obscure subjects of monarchies, but even kings on their thrones, and ministers in their palaces; for that mind always becomes cramped, which has no resource but in selfishness:[1] there is always something mean and disgusting, in whatever

[1] The French word is *égoisme*, but it seems to me here to convey an idea very different from egotism.

relates

relates to ſelf alone, in whatever has not nature for its origin, and liberty for its object. Ambition in monarchies, even when it ſtrives to elevate itſelf to what is right, is ever of a degraded nature. Nor can men, in them, ever ſufficiently leave ſelf out of the queſtion, or feel the full influence of enthuſiaſm; for inſtead of exulting in the gratitude of their equals, they muſt cringe to receive the thanks of a maſter; and be humbled by the littleneſs of every thing which ſurrounds them. A diſgraceful *ennui*[2] there marks with its ſeal, all thoſe feelings, which are not either degraded by ſervitude, occupied by baſe enjoyments, or preſerved from contagion by ſtudy and ſolitude. And if our riſing republic have had to encounter many obſtacles, and particularly a want of energy in its members, this may be fairly attributed to the monarchical education which they have received. The characters of men, at preſent, are not ſufficiently expanded for their minds: they are enervated, like the body, by habits of indolence, or by exceſſive indulgence in pleaſure. Liberty, which ſeems to eſtabliſh herſelf, if one may uſe the expreſſion, in ſpite of men, feels, at every inſtant, the inſtru-

[2] There is no word in the Engliſh language, as has been obſerved above, which anſwers exactly to *ennui*. It may be deſcribed to be a kind of *reſtleſs indolence*, which, though incapable of enjoying repoſe, has not energy enough to ſeek for employment.

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ments which ſhe uſes, acquire, under her hands, freſh eaſe and energy.

I would have added that, now more than ever, inactivity would be a ſevere puniſhment to a people, accuſtomed for ſix years to occupy itſelf with important concerns, and to exerciſe all its powers in the immenſe career which has been opened before it. Thoſe who labour for the reſtoration of royalty, would be the firſt to groan under their own ſucceſs. The eagerneſs and agitation of purſuit makes them inattentive to the end in view: but (with the exception of a ſmall number, who might continue to be employed in the work of oppreſſion) they would find themſelves weighed down by chagrin, ariſing from that want of activity, to which they had condemned themſelves by the ſucceſs of their own exertions.

Monarchy, beſides, rather changes the objects of ambition, than extinguiſhes it: drawing it from the paths traced out by the law, it puſhes it into arbitrary meaſures; and, mixing more of meanneſs in the agitation which it occaſions, reduces all the ſublimity of hope to mere perſonal intereſt; thus degrading, even while it intoxicates, as much as popular ambition elevates the human mind.

I would then have enquired, if the ſublime diſcovery of the repreſentative ſyſtem, at once preſerving the glorious object of republican ambition, and leſ-

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ſening the violence of its fermentation, does not eſtabliſh a juſt medium, and if even this advantage be not in proportion to the extent of a republic; becauſe the grandeur of ſurrounding objects makes little paſſions diſappear, excludes trifling cabals, and places men at ſuch a diſtance from each other, as to prevent them from being occupied by their diſagreements, their intereſts, and their perſonal jealouſies.

To the often-repeated objection, of the intricacy of the ſprings which give motion to a republic, I *would* have anſwered, that the ſame number of ſprings is always neceſſary. The pretended ſimplicity of a monarchy is not founded in fact. A King, like every other executive power, is obliged to delegate his authority; and royalty has no other effect, but that of rendering theſe delegations always arbitrary, and often abſurd.

To the abuſes of liberty, I *would* have oppoſed the abuſes of authority. Power is more intoxicating than liberty; widely-extended authority being in itſelf an abuſe, every thing which flows from it may be expected to partake of the properties of its ſource. Finally, the miſapplication of power (by promiſing more, and leſs accurately defined, pleaſures) holds out ſtronger temptations than the exceſſes of liberty.

I would have pointed out one advantage, but too little obſerved, of a republic over a monarchy, that is, the preſervation of the forms of freedom.

Republics

Republics are frequently reproached with diſguiſing oppreſſion, and with proſtituting the moſt ſacred names to the purpoſes of the moſt deteſtable tyranny; this is, no doubt, a great evil; but they who ſee in this defect, nothing but evil, appear to me to view only one ſide of the queſtion.

The influence of words over mankind is ſufficiently notorious. This influence has ſometimes fatal effects, but is more frequently productive of great advantage.

Words, indeed, have ſo much power over us, that they recal ideas. Separated from them by any foreign cauſe, they unite again as ſoon as that cauſe is removed. Thus forms perpetuate the ſpirit of an eſtabliſhment, even though they ſhould be extremely perverted; and they reſemble thoſe trees which may be eaſily bent, but reſtore themſelves by their elaſticity, to their original ſtate, as ſoon as the preſſure is removed.

Republican forms preſerve a kind of tradition of liberty, and attach themſelves to the reality, as ſoon as the interruption of tyranny is paſſed away; on the other hand, deſpotic forms make ſlavery ſacred, ſo that the ſervile mind laſts longer than the actual ſervitude; and is ſo depraved, that even upon the fall of the tyrant, not a ſingle nerve of any of his ſlaves, vibrates to the ſound of independence.

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Had the horrors of ROBESPIERRE been put in practice in the name of right divine and paſſive obedience; or even in that of peace and order, (the pretexts of monarchies) the 9th of Thermidor,[3] meeting with no ideas but thoſe of right divine and paſſive obedience, might have ſtopped the maſſacres, but could never have recalled liberty.

It is not from the want of revolutions that the people of Aſia have never been free; but it is from the want of names and forms, which, when one yoke is broken, ſhould point out to them ſome better object than that of ſubmitting themſelves to a new one.

I would have applied theſe ſame obſervations to the principles of morality. In them alſo, forms have an effect upon things of importance. Corruption is increaſed by the contagion of example, and leſſened by being forced to concealment and diſguiſe. Vice ſoon becomes diſguſting, when it leads only to reſtraint. A man, after a certain time, enters ſeriouſly into any part which he is obliged to play conſtantly and with great attention, and he becomes by habit, what he at firſt wiſhed to appear from hypocriſy. A republic cannot exiſt without certain kinds of morality; but, as every thing in nature tends to preſerve itſelf, it has the power of producing that very ſpecies of virtue which is neceſſary to its own exiſtence.

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[3] 28th of July.

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I would then have obſerved, that the theory of monarchy is not a ſolitary idea; but intimately connected with a queſtion important on other accounts, and whoſe conſequences pervade every branch of ſocial order; I mean, hereditary diſtinctions, or the inequality of ranks. A King[4] cannot exiſt without a nobility. It therefore becomes important to examine the advantages and inconveniencies of hereditary diſtinctions.

One of its principal advantages is, to eſtabliſh, what they call, a kind of an empire of opinion, a ſubordination of regard, which ſpares government (properly ſo called) from the neceſſity of employing direct means; and which, by preparing the maſs of the people for ſubmiſſion, has, of itſelf, the power of retaining them in it.

It appears to me that, in this ſtatement, the power of grateful[5] remembrance over the minds of the multitude, is much exaggerated. Remembrance is a ſort of coin, which has but little circulation, except among the claſſes intereſted to keep up its value. Theſe claſſes alone are capable of feeling the ſentiment of this kind of eſteem. And it requires a mind

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[4] This is taking for granted, what all the friends of the Conſtitution of 1789, and probably many others, would ſtrenuouſly deny.

[5] The word in the original is *ſouvenir*. I fear I have not been able to preſerve the idea very exactly.

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of a high degree of refinement to be capable of entertaining that erroneous, but delicate, ſpecies of ſuperſtition, whoſe romantic exiſtence is compoſed of the ſhades of the paſt. Vulgar minds are incapable of enjoying it, as they are of all ſenſations, modified, complicated, vague, or ſentimental. And thoſe who are ſuſceptible of them, have no need of any reſtraint of this nature: they would not be leſs likely to reſpect one better founded in reaſon.

As to the people, power is what it reſpects; and if it ſeems to attach, to the idea of nobility, a ſentiment of veneration more profound than what it ſhews to powerful upſtarts, it is becauſe it relies more upon the continuance of the power of the nobles. Its regard is not founded upon a reſpect for the paſt, but upon what it looks to in future: not upon gratitude, but upon expectation. The beſt proof of this is, that as ſoon as it becomes convinced that nobility is for ever divorced from power, the deluſion inſtantly vaniſhes. To illuſtrate this, we have only to look how it treats (even in countries which have the leaſt pretenſions to freedom) thoſe nobles who are baniſhed from their country, and ſtripped of their property; whatever names they may drag about with them in their misfortunes. But the habit of ſeeing power attached to certain offices, inſtead of ſeeing it united to certain names, would ſoon produce upon the people the ſame effect which nobility does; that

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is, a conviction that they are inſeparably connected with power.

In order, therefore, that nobility ſhould have any influence over that claſs which requires to be reſtrained, permanent power muſt be added to it; and where there is permanent power, nobility becomes uſeleſs.

The only undoubted advantage of hereditary diſtinctions is, that they preſerve, in the adminiſtration of public affairs, a ſpirit of uniformity; or at leaſt, by the ſlowneſs with which they adopt any change, and by their oppoſition to all ſudden innovation, they prevent violent convulſions. But even this advantage may be attained, in a much higher degree, under a form of government, which, changing at proper intervals the depoſitaries of authority, makes authority itſelf an abſtract being, immortal and immoveable.

After having thus refuted the apparent advantages of hereditary diſtinctions, *I would* have pointed out its real inconveniencies.

Thoſe who repreſent hereditary diſtinctions as the effects of, and neceſſary attendant upon, natural inequality, advance a palpable ſophiſm; they are, on the contrary, the deſtruction of that inequality, and they produce levelling in the inverſe ſenſe of the word.

Is natural inequality a good thing? Reſpect it then in your inſtitutions. Suffer that difference to exiſt among men, which is cauſed by faculties, by talents, and by induſtry.

This kind of diſtinction does not irritate the mind, becauſe it ſeems poſſible to every one to remove it. Every one feels a deep conſciouſneſs, that he can, by determined reſolution, courage, and exertion of the mind, raiſe himſelf to any rank to which he may aſpire. In the mean time, his pride is tranquillized, his indolence undiſturbed, and his ſelf-love ſoothed, by encouraging this vague and flattering poſſibility. He is not agitated by rage like a diſarmed captive; but enjoys his repoſe, like a man who has voluntarily laid down his arms.

On the other hand, is this inequality an evil? Why then raiſe up, by its ſide, a new kind of inequality, which does not deſtroy, but which attacks it? Do you not incur the danger of the moſt dreadful ſhocks, by thus creating a power which is hoſtile to nature? With a view to eſtabliſh order, would you invent two contrary forces, one of which preſſes by its weight of matter, and the other impels by the rapidity of its motion? Do there exiſt in nature ſo few elements of diſcord, that it becomes neceſſary to create a new one; which, incapable of uniting itſelf with any other, ſeparates, divides, and agitates them all with an eternal and convulſive motion?

The friends of royalty appeal to hiſtory againſt a republic; *I too* WOULD *have* appealed to hiſtory againſt hereditary diſtinctions.

This inſtitution has, in every age, excited a revolt, lighted up a war, or cauſed a maſſacre. England, Germany, France, and Italy, in their turns, exhibit to us their peaſants flying to arms againſt their lords. Every where we ſee the human race proteſting, in characters of blood, againſt this inſult offered to their rights. La Jacquerie,[6] Anabaptiſts, Levellers, and others, have riſen up in ſucceſſion, but have all diſhonoured their cauſe by cruelty, that conſtant attribute of ſlaves, and all been led aſtray by religious enthuſiaſm. Can, however, that inſtitution which has cauſed ſo many calamities, be called a protecting ſyſtem?

Every thing which you advance in favour of hereditary diſtinctions, was urged by the ancients in defence of ſlavery; and yet the Helots made the inhabitants of Sparta tremble, and forced them to have recourſe to aſſaſſination to reſtrain their exceſſes; and Spartacus filled Rome itſelf with diſmay.

All the arguments which you now offer in behalf of hereditary diſtinctions were uſed in the Roman ſenate; and yet, from the time of SP. CASSIUS to that of CÆSAR, the republic was torn in pieces by

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[6] I know not what ſect our author means to point out by this word.

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factions, and the plebeians, always ſtruggling againſt oppreſſion, at length annihilated the liberties of their country.

All that you ſay for hereditary diſtinctions, the Weſt-Indians ſay in their *code noir*, and yet the negroes conſtantly fill the colonies with bloodſhed; and the horrors which they commit, make one bluſh to bear the name of man, and deteſt the oppreſſed almoſt as much as the oppreſſors.

Do not deceive yourſelves: theſe crimes are not to be imputed to the liberty which reclaims rights, but to the tyranny which invades them: liberty merely acts on the defenſive, the privileged orders are the aggreſſors.

Finally, were hereditary diſtinctions attended with none of theſe terrible inconveniencies, there would ſtill be a deciſive argument againſt the ſyſtem, viz. that it can be no more reſtored to its priſtine vigour.

Kings, nobles, and thoſe who defend them, appear to be ignorant of the power of ideas. Accuſtomed to ſee viſible force rule over inviſible opinions, they do not perceive that it is to thoſe opinions that this force owes its origin. Habit renders them indifferent to the miraculous effects of authority. They ſee things in motion; and as they do not comprehend its internal ſprings, ſociety appears to them to be a piece of common, vulgar mechaniſm. They take power for a cauſe, when in fact it is an effect,

and, thus miſtaking, they wiſh to make the effect act againſt the cauſe.

In the mean time, the empire of the world, in reality, belongs to ideas alone. Ideas are what create force, by transforming themſelves either into ſentiments, into paſſions, or into enthuſiaſm. They form and perfect themſelves in ſilence; they then unite and acquire, as it were, electrical force, by their intercourſe in ſociety. Thus ſupported, and thus compleated by the mutual aid of each other, they ruſh into action with an irreſiſtible impetuoſity.

No idea, once fairly brought into circulation, has ever been withdrawn from it.* Never has any revolution,

* Some men, ſufficiently enlightened to have renounced the ſyſtem of combating ideas by force, ſtill think they may be reſiſted with advantage by other ideas, and therefore continue to oppoſe, to truths which they conſider as dangerous, prejudices which appear to them ſalutary.

This is the great reſource which the writers of their party at preſent point out to kings. "When time has deſtroyed a prejudice," ſays one of the moſt conſpicuous among them, "a wiſe legiſlator ought "immediately to replace it by another."

This is a miſtake. Firſt we muſt obſerve, that ideas are independent of men. Like every thing in nature, they have their commencement, their progreſs, and their developement. They are formed from ſenſations, from experience, events, and all thoſe external circumſtances over which we have no controul.

It is impoſſible then to eſtabliſh ideas which the force of circumſtances has not induced, to annihilate thoſe to which that force has given birth, or to give freſh importance to thoſe whoſe reign is paſſed away.

The ideas which any one thus wiſhes to create for his own purpoſes, having no connection with thoſe which neceſſarily exiſt, have nothing to

volution, founded upon an idea, failed of ſucceſs, unleſs the idea were incomplete; and in that caſe,

to which they can unite themſelves, nor any means of ſtriking roots from which they may derive their ſupport. They do not form a whole, and conſequently, being inſulated and without ſupport, they muſt ſoon diſappear.

They reſemble that imitative patriotiſm, by which it is attempted to produce an equality between ſoldiers who have none, and thoſe who defend their country.

One radical defect of prejudices is, that they never can be employed exactly when they are wanted, and that they generally fail at the period when there is the greateſt neceſſity for them.

A ſecond diſadvantage of them is, the impoſſibility of foreſeeing and directing their effects. As it is only from breaking the regular train of reaſoning, from giving the mind falſe principles, and hindering the natural progreſs and conſequences of true ones, that a prejudice derives its origin; we never can be certain that ſimilar deviations may not conſtantly take place, nor aſcertain what concluſion he, who adopts any particular prejudice, may draw from it. We have reaſon then to fear from falſe ideas, not only their immediate and natural conſequences, which are generally of the worſt kind, but alſo things which ſeem the leaſt likely to reſult from them. Who can gueſs at the route which the mind is likely to purſue, when it deviates from the paths of reaſon? Truth is uniform, but error is various. A falſe idea is a diſorderly impulſe, whoſe direction cannot be calculated. While we give this impulſe, (and by the very act of giving it) we deprive ourſelves of the power of directing it. Who will anſwer that a mind, no longer purſuing the direction of truth, ſhall not wander from that new one which has been attempted to be impoſed upon it? Why ſhould a man derive, from the idea which he has been forced to adopt, more reaſonable conſequences, than from that from which he has already been made to draw a falſe concluſion? On the contrary, he has an additional temptation to fall into error, becauſe he has acquired the habit of doing ſo. Whoever attempts to make uſe of prejudices, will, from their very nature, conſtantly find himſelf deceived by them.

After all, we may, perhaps, profit by thoſe which have been long eſtabliſhed, becauſe experience in that caſe ſupplies the place of logic,

and

the revolution was merely the precurſor of a criſis, and became finally ſucceſsful as ſoon as the idea, being perfected, was again brought to the charge.[f]

That of equality is, as it were, a parent idea, which has never been wholly expelled from the human heart. It has been mixed with every thing. And there is no religion[7] which has not, in its origin, given it the ſanction of its authority; and one of the main frauds of every prieſthood has been to pervert the ſpirit of the inſtitution, in order to withdraw this idea from publick obſervation.

The commencement of the ſocial ſtate is a difficult enigma, but its progreſs is ſimple and uniform. If we obſerve mankind when they firſt emerge from the impenetrable clouds which conceal their origin,

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and points out the concluſions which are drawn by thoſe who admit them. But even this advantage is very tranſitory; firſt, becauſe men have a natural tendency to truth, and falſe ideas are daily loſing ground; and again, becauſe the progreſs of truth, by modifying theſe very ideas, and deſtroying their connection with each other, indirectly changes the effect of ſuch as it does not venture to attack openly.

[f] What ſometimes deceives us, as to the ſucceſs of revolutions produced by ideas, is, that we take things merely acceſſary for the main object. Thus, for example, it is generally conſidered that the revolution of England in 1648 failed, becauſe royalty was eſtabliſhed. But it was not the idea of a republic, but that of religious liberty, which cauſed the revolution. The republic was nothing but an acceſſary, and it is true that this acceſſary failed; but the leading idea, the rejection of the catholic theocracy, obtained a complete triumph.

[7] I know of no religion, except Chriſtianity, which, in any ſtage of it, inculcates perfect equality, and univerſal brotherhood, as one of its eſſential and fundamental principles.

we behold them advancing towards equality, over the wreck of inſtitutions of every kind.[g]

No ſtep which they have taken with this view has ever been trodden back again. If we ſometimes imagine that we ſee a retrogade movement, it ariſes from our miſtaking the combat for a defeat, and the agitation of the conteſt for a flight.

Let us firſt contemplate thoſe proſcribed claſſes, degraded and deprived even of ſuch an exiſtence as ſeems imſeparable from every human being. This odious diſtinction is now confined to a few half-deſtroyed tribes, which no longer deſerve the name of nations.

Let us next conſider the ſtate of ſlavery, which is leſs diſguſting than the proſcription of whole claſſes. It has diſappeared, without the poſſibility of return, from among all civilized nations.

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[g] A work like this does not afford an opportunity either of eſtabliſhing, or even refuting, any regular ſyſtem. But the progreſs of ſociety would be a glorious ſubject for hiſtory; and one might demonſtrate, by a thouſand proofs, what two great men have obſerved—the one (BOULANGER) upon what is paſſed, from the traditions of antiquity; the other (CONDORCET) upon the future, from abſtract reaſonings. We ſee clearly, as it appears to me, in the annals of nations, the human ſpecies collecting itſelf together after ſome great convulſion of nature; and under an oppreſſive theocracy, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, ſetting forward on its march, driven on by a ſecret and irreſiſtible impulſe, and regaining ſlowly and by dreadful ſtruggles all thoſe rights which it had loſt.

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The feudal ſyſtem, leſs terrible than ſlavery, ſucceeded it. It has fallen of itſelf, and that for ever.

This was replaced by nobility. Nobility has now vaniſhed from among the firſt people of Europe, and in that nation, at leaſt, it will never be reſtored.

An attempt may be made to bring forward this deluſion again, by decorating it with the name of hereditary magiſtracy: but this is only to invite another overthrow.

It becomes us then, at length, to yield to the force of neceſſity, no longer to miſunderſtand the progreſs of ſociety; nor bring on, by our uſeleſs ſtruggles, bloody conteſts, and mark each defeat by dreadful misfortunes. Let us ceaſe then to force men to purchaſe their rights, by crimes and by calamities.

I do not enter into the inveſtigations which theſe ideas require, becauſe, I repeat it, I do not write againſt any form of government, but againſt every ſpecies of new revolution in this country. I do not invite any monarchical ſtate to adopt republican ideas; but I adjure every Frenchman, in the name of all preſent intereſts, of all calculations for the future, and of enthuſiaſm itſelf; in the name of all the evils which may be prevented, and of all the wounds which may be healed, not to attempt any revolution againſt the Republic.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE CONCLUSION.

IT has been my object, in the preceding pages, to attach to the Republic ſuch men as may be diſunited from it by melancholy recollections, by calculations which appear to me erroneous, by a kind of vanity which I cannot help conſidering as childiſh, or by hopes which I think may be demonſtrated to be ill-founded. I have thought it the duty of all the friends of liberty to exert every nerve in order to ſtrengthen a government, upon the exiſtence of which liberty, in the preſent criſis, wholly depends. Let me now be permitted to addreſs myſelf to that government itſelf, and to the writers who defend it.

I will venture to repreſent to the former, that the moſt imminent danger which threatens it does not ariſe from its enemies; it ariſes from certain revolutionary habits, which are in direct hoſtility to all principles, which tend to pervert publick opinion, and which preſs upon ſociety in a maſs, and upon each individual in particular, at all times and in every form.

Theſe habits are not the reſult of the tyranny of the Decemvirs, but of the miſmanagement of honeſt men.

men. The thing which has cauſed the greateſt miſchief to France, and that too a kind of miſchief the moſt difficult to be repaired, has been an over impatience to do good.[h]

ROBESPIERRE murdered, but he did not deceive. The opinion which he overawed was not led aſtray. It retained its place in the heart, and rather acquired ſtrength from the horrors of oppreſſion. Good men, on the contrary, by uſing the ſeverity of revolutionary puniſhments againſt revolutionary villains, have corrupted public opinion in its very ſource. They have rendered illegal exertions ſacred, by making them produce good. They ought to have profited of all the calamities which were the effects of arbitrary meaſures, in order to engrave deeply in

[h] It is to be obſerved, that it is almoſt always through great ills, that Revolutions which tend to the good of mankind, operate; and that the more pernicious the thing to be deſtroyed is, the more fatal are the revolutionary evils by which it is attended. Slavery was put an end to by inſtitutions, which, for fifteen centuries, have made us purchaſe this bleſſing by a kind of political baſtardy, and by various other calamities. But the progreſs of the human race, at once retarded and favoured by theſe inſtitutions, has never been turned aſide from its courſe. We now behold theſe very inſtitutions fall to pieces, without ſeeing ſlavery raiſe itſelf upon their ruins. The evil is paſt, the good remains. Again; the feudal ſyſtem was deſtroyed by thoſe abſurd and bloody expeditions which depopulated the moſt beautiful parts of Europe. And finally, nobility has received its death-blow, from a revolution, which has, for fifteen months, covered with dead bodies and ruins the moſt civilized empire on the globe.

every

every mind, in order to impreſs in indelible characters, a full conviction that they can never produce any thing but evil. They have neglected this immenſe advantage, and have proved, by a kind of deceitful experience, that arbitrary meaſures may be uſeful.

It is infinitely more dangerous to adopt revolutionary principles for the ſake of virtue, than for the ſake of vice.

When the wicked violate forms to the diſadvantage of honeſt men, every one perceives it to be an aggravation of their offence. And we attach ourſelves ſtill more ſtrongly to thoſe very forms, becauſe they have been violated; we learn in ſilence, and by our misfortunes, to regard them as ſacred things, and as the protectors and preſervers of ſocial order. But when honeſt men violate forms in order to puniſh the wicked, the people no longer know in what to confide; and all forms and all law appear to them as obſtacles in the way of juſtice. They contract I know not what habits, they frame I know not what theory of the equity of arbitrary meaſures, which wholly ſubverts all former ideas; for there is nothing in the body politic, but forms, which is ſtable and has the power of reſiſting encroachments. Even the ſubſtance of what they are meant to protect, viz. juſtice and virtue, may be diſfigured, and their names are at the mercy of every one who

pleaſes

pleaſes to uſe them. ROBESPIERRE can invoke his country, liberty, and the moral virtues, as well as LANJUINAIS.

When the tyrant directed hymns to be compoſed which had for their burthen, "away with pity! "blood, more blood!" one knew that he was a monſter; and the horror of blood, and the love of pity, grew ſtronger from the deteſtation which he inſpired: but when upright and humane men, ſeduced by a ſentiment of blind indignation, adopted ſongs, in which they talked "of ſacrificing hecatombs," one was almoſt tempted to think "ſacrificing hecatombs" was a laudable action. Thus juſtice and humanity are weakened, by the very confidence which we have in their moſt virtuous defenders.

Hence reſults what is a very leading trait in the character and opinions of the preſent moment, (a trait, however, common to all parties) viz. that arbitrary meaſures are not hated for their own ſake, (which they ought moſt decidedly to be in every free country) but only in ſuch and ſuch caſes as may happen to thwart our own feelings and intereſt. As long as this diſpoſition ſhall continue, nothing can be ſtable; the conſtitution itſelf is no better than a pamphlet, which each party may ſhut at its pleaſure.

I think I have proved that I am not a ſtranger to the great power of circumſtances. But we ought never to forget how liable things of this nature are

to

to be abuſed; and if we do not take care, we ſhall always find circumſtances oppoſed to principles.—Factions will advance from circumſtance to circumſtance, conſtantly beyond the bounds of the law, ſometimes with pure, ſometimes with perfidious, intentions; and perpetually demanding great meaſures, in the name of the people, of liberty, and of their country.

It is the buſineſs of government to eradicate this habit, which would make the revolution eternal: it has the means, and it is its intereſt to do ſo. In every thing which the public ſafety demands, there are two methods of proceeding, the one legal and the other arbitrary. In the end, the former, even tho' it be more ſlow, will always beſt anſwer the purpoſes of government, for from it alone can be derived permanent dignity and force.

The uſe of arbitrary meaſures degrades governments, and reduces them to the rank of factions. The French, for the laſt ſix years, have combated each other with poiſoned arms, and yet expreſs their aſtoniſhment, that their conteſts ſhould be murderous, inſtead of being deciſive. Throw away, then, theſe fatal weapons! return to the peaceable obſervance of the laws; and when you ſhall have mutually acknowledged each other to be entitled to the ſame rights, and to the protection of the ſame forms, you will be far advanced towards a reconciliation:

you

you will then attack each other with leſs fury; your defeats will be leſs bloody, and your victories leſs diſhonourable. As long as you ſhall conſider arbitrary meaſures, in the light of weapons fit to be forced from your enemy in order to be uſed by yourſelf, your enemy, of courſe, will feel diſpoſed to retaliate; and the conteſt will never be terminated, becauſe arbitrary meaſures can never be exhauſted.

One dreadful ſource of arbitrary meaſures is ſtill open, and this is the moment in which it ought to be dried up. The greateſt part of the revolutionary laws are not yet abrogated. Is it intended that the work of ROBESPIERRE ſhould ſurvive him, or have the legiſlators of France ſuppoſed that the decrees of ſuch a monſter, being eſſentially unlawful, do not deſerve to be annulled? This ſilence, however, may have the moſt fatal effects. I am, I confeſs, ſtruck with horror, when I ſee, though for things of little importance, laws quoted which were promulgated between the 31ſt of May and the 9th of Thermidor.[9] Haſten to conſign them to the oblivion which they ſo well merit. Give to all thoſe which are juſt and neceſſary a new ſanction, and annihilate the others: till that is done, no citizen can ſleep in peace. The ſword of the Decemvirs will, till then, appear to be ſuſpended over every head. Be ſevere, but

[9] 28th of July.

at

at the ſame time be explicit: you are ſtrong enough to render ambuſcades unneceſſary. Point out diſtinctly what you wiſh to preſerve, from what you reject with a degree of horror which does you credit; and ſuffer your code no longer to be diſgraced by thoſe dark and ſecret laws,[9] which, involving themſelves in obſcurity, are forgotten by the innocent man, but ſtored up in the memory of the villain, againſt the day of his power.

As to the writers who dedicate themſelves to the ſervice of the republic, let me earneſtly exhort them to diſtinguiſh the functions of government, from the duties of the individuals.

Government cannot enter into all the ſhades of opinion. It cannot ſearch out whether there may not be ſome friends of liberty, among thoſe who do not think a republic can be eſtabliſhed. It is its duty to regard all thoſe who are not attached to the preſent conſtitution of France, if not in the light of enemies, at leaſt in that of men whom it is neceſſary to watch.

The duty of individuals is very different. Government can only ſee in the maſs, *they* ought to ſee in the detail. *It* muſt neglect no reaſon for caution;

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9 Similar, perhaps, to thoſe which (though "in a ſtate of deſuetude" as they expreſs it) were revived by the Scotch judges, againſt MUIR, PALMER, &c. and to many which, though never acted upon, are ſtill ſuffered to diſgrace the Engliſh ſtatute-book.

they

they ought to collect together every motive for toleration. *It* can employ no means but those of reſtraint and force; *they* ought to omit nothing which can be done by reaſoning and perſuaſion.

It would be weakneſs in government to attempt an accurate appreciation of every ſyſtem, or a nice examination of every opinion. In individuals, on the other hand, that ſpecies of watchfulneſs, which hunts for plots, and brands with that name every ſlight deviation from duty, would be the means of diſſolving all the bands of ſociety.[1]

Let then both one and the other remain within the ſphere of their duty. The republic being now eſtabliſhed, government ought to make every thing yield to the republican ſyſtem: but the friends of liberty ſhould endeavour to perſuade thoſe whom the government reſtrains. *They* ſhould endeavour to find out the ſlighteſt differences, even almoſt imperceptible ſhades of opinion; and carefully to diſtinguiſh thoſe who really hate the cauſe of liberty, from thoſe who have the misfortune to diſtruſt its effects; and thoſe who feel this diſtruſt, from ſuch as are merely apprehenſive of anarchy. They ought to examine

[1] This applies very exactly to Mr. REEVES's Club at the Crown and Anchor, and to the various affiliated ones throughout the kingdom. They certainly hunted for plots, and certainly branded with that name, what did not prove to be ſo. Of their effect upon ſociety, the public muſt be left to judge.

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every diviſion of the enemy's army, with a view either to recognize their old allies, or to encourage new deſerters. They ought to conſider as ranged under ſo many diſtinct ſtandards, ſuch as are animated by different motives—the man of ſenſibility weighed down by his ſorrows, the timid man alarmed by his fears, the philoſopher ſeduced by his ſpeculations, or checked by his doubts—the ſlave of habits, the friend of repoſe, and the lover of order. They ought, finally, to exclude and repulſe none but the degraded partiſans of pure deſpotiſm, or the ferocious advocates of crimes and barbarity.

Theſe are the only men from whom nothing is to be hoped; for he who reaſons, may be convinced; he who feels, may be ſoftened; and he who trembles, may be re-aſſured. There are arguments ſuited to every underſtanding, modes of touching every heart, and calculations likely to ſatisfy even all the intereſted.

Do not imitate thoſe miſerable partiſans, who in fact recruit for the enemy's army; who preſent truth in ſuch a ſhape as to diſguſt the underſtanding; liberty, ſo as to make the mind recoil with horror; and even hope itſelf, ſo as to inſpire terror. Who force all the paſſions, every ſentiment, and all the various kinds of fear, to unite themſelves againſt a ſyſtem, whoſe greateſt misfortune is that of being defended by them. And who think they have de-

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ſerved well of the republic, when they have diſcovered, or even made it, one enemy the more.

Rather do you traverſe our deſolated plains, with the olive-branch in your hand. You will diſcover friends where they only ſeek, and therefore only find, victims and captives.

And you, ye Frenchmen, who are equally deteſted by the enemies of the republic, which you have either ſupported by your courage or ſanctioned by your preſence, rally and unite yourſelves. This is the moment to decide whether man is to be brutalized or reſtored to the rights of his nature, to determine between ſuperſtition and the light of reaſon, between the eleventh and the nineteenth centuries. The conteſt is of leſs importance to thoſe men who prefer death to ſervitude; it chiefly intereſts the ſelfiſh and the timid, whoſe only wiſh is tranquillity, but who are not aware that repoſe under a deſpotiſm is nothing but impotence in deſpair. The grand queſtion to be decided is, whether we ſhall enjoy this tranquillity under the peaceful ſhade of a republic, or tread back the terrible career which France has paſſed over; and return to tyranny, by tracing upwards the river of blood which has been poured out in the name of liberty.

FINIS.